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*THE 'LIVELY PEGGY.'*

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE eye that will not see has often a vision of the truth too accurate for the owner's comfort. But this did not apply to the picture of his daughter's life that Dr. Portnal conjured up, only to shudder at it. The young couple's home, though it depended on a pittance and was straitened by poverty, was, as we know, neither squalid nor mean. It lacked the luxuries and even the comforts of the Rectory, and space was scanty and room precious. But the neatness that discipline had taught the soldier the limits of ship-life had imposed on the seaman ; and to neatness, the woman, casting her part into the common stock, added the gift of refinement—a touch here and a change there. The floors might be bare and the walls whitened, but taste made of bareness a thing not unsightly. When the sun shone through the low casements, and the salt breeze, blowing fresh from the Channel, entered by the doorway and stirred the sea-tang hanging on the wall, or when, the red curtains drawn, the firelight fell on the Captain netting in his corner, while Peggy, with a sparing hand, measured the tea into the brown pot, many a finer room might have seemed less home-like.

True, there were tasks to be done that the girl-wife had never thought to do. But love and youth lightened these for her, and if the men had had their way her dainty hands had never been roughened, nor her feet found cause to flag. And Peggy was true woman, and to care for her men, to cosset them and to spoil them, was, in her day at any rate, the woman's instinct, inbred in her through generations. So after a while, and merrily, she dethroned the men. She set aside their clumsy efforts, derided their methods and laughed them out of employment. Presently they revolved round her, willing to help but afraid to step in. She swept, she mended, she baked, she singed her thumb trying the heat of the oven—and licked it—and they bore it.

But it was a sad day for the Captain when, in default of the hired woman, she washed his first shirt. It might have been better washed, the frills more neatly ironed. But there were tears in the old man's eyes when he donned it. It was to him a sacred thing and an amulet. Harmless, amiable, God-fearing, the old soldier had but the one weakness, and against this he was now doubly armed, alike by remorse for the past and by reverence for the innocent life that had brought hope into his old heart.

Of course Peggy had her troubles ; and buoyant as she was by nature, and brightened by youth and hope, there were stray hours when, left alone, her spirits drooped. She was parted from those beside whom she had lived from infancy. The home that had been hers was forbidden to her. Her sister shunned her, her father froze her with cold courtesy. Nor was it pleasant to be sent to Coventry by her world ; to be met with a distant bow where a laughing greeting had been hers, to be taught in the street where all knew her that in the opinion of her equals she had lost her caste. But, though wilful, the girl was no fool. She had reckoned on these things and discounted them. She had set the loss against the gain and held herself well paid. Not in her worst moments did she—  
happy in this beyond her deserts—regret her bargain. She was often anxious and sometimes fearful, foreseeing a new expense that must presently fall on the little household. But for compensation she read in the men's eyes a deeper tenderness, a more assiduous thought for her ; a watchfulness to save her and spare her that provoked the young wife now to tears and now to laughter.

If only that trouble, fraught with delicious hopes as well as fears, had been all ! But it was not. A woman's love has keen eyes : it does not sleep. Already she knew her husband through and through, knew his weakness as well as his strength, and mothered the one as she worshipped the other. But even his affection could not blind her to the fact that he was not content. The home satisfied her, but it could not satisfy him. She saw this plainly and ever more plainly : saw him grow with every month more moody and less gay. He looked at her and she was happy, but he looked away from her and she knew that his thoughts strayed, and she guessed too clearly their direction. She knew his mind, and knew it set on things that meant little to her but almost everything to him. For—it was natural no doubt—Bligh could not accept his lot, he could not sit down with failure ; he rebelled morning and evening, down-sitting and up-rising, against fate. Poverty, and

especially her poverty, ate into his heart, and, alas! at times spoiled his temper. Now and again—not often and never unrepented—his humour showed in a hasty word, a sharp look, and she saw clear to the discontent that teased him. More often it betrayed itself in sudden changes of mood, in a restless activity, in the seaman's habit of tramping up and down his narrow confines.

And she lived so close to him that she could not but see it all. Nor did she lack confirmation of her fears, were it needed. The Captain, too, was watching, and was anxious; she discerned it, she read it in his eyes. And by and by there came a time when, with alarm, she saw the restlessness of the one and the anxiety of the other redoubled. She scented a crisis, she feared everything, but she knew not what; and one morning when Charles, after eating his breakfast, had hastened down to the Cove—he seemed to be unusually busy—she could be silent no longer.

'What is it?' she asked the old man, attacking him with an abruptness that routed him before the battle was joined. 'What is it? I am not blind. He is unhappy and he is afraid. He is thinking of something. What is it? You can't keep it from me.'

He tried feebly to evade her. 'What should there be, my dear?' he said. But he had not the wit to hide his dismay. 'You—you frighten yourself—indeed, you frighten yourself for nothing! And—and at this time you should not!'

But she was not deceived. 'No,' she replied, 'that is no use. Tell me! I must know some time!'

He wavered, parleyed, and was lost. 'It is just a thought,' he pleaded. 'There is nothing in it. Nothing settled, my dear! And in your state—'

'Never mind my state!' she cried, her eyes wide with alarm. 'Don't you see that you are keeping me in suspense? What is it, this nothing? You have said too much to hide it now.'

'But he will tell you himself,' he protested. 'When anything is settled he will tell you! Of course he will, my dear.' But his fencing was useless; her eyes frightened him; he told her. 'It is only something that has been suggested about the—the *Peggy*, my dear. Budgen has—has offered her to him.'

'The *Peggy*!' she exclaimed, holding her head with both hands and staring at him. 'Offered it to him? What do you mean?'

'To take her out—on the next cruise, you know,' the poor man explained.

Her hands fell. 'Ah!' she said.

' But nothing—nothing is settled. Nothing! Nothing! It's all in the air, my dear. He will tell you himself before anything is done ! '

' And he would leave me ! ' she cried. She rose up, a flame of indignation in her eyes. ' He would leave me ! He wishes to go. Oh, I know he does. He wishes to go ! '

The Captain was beside himself. ' I don't know ! I don't know ! ' he babbled. ' I ought not to have told you ! '

She made no outcry beyond that: she added nothing. She sat down again, sat motionless, still and tragic, staring at the bare walls, seeing nothing but her own loneliness, the man's selfishness, his fickleness ! It was for this, for this—to be abandoned on the first temptation, that she had given her all, given up all, abandoned home, family, everything ! For this ! She stood for no more than this in his life !

The poor Captain was appalled at what he had done, and he tried to shield himself. ' You will not tell him ? ' he begged. ' He will tell you himself—to-day, my dear, I daresay.'

At that pride came to her aid, and ' No,' she said, ' I shall not tell him. He will tell me himself. Of course'—but in spite of pride her lip trembled—' he will tell me.'

And he did tell her that night, noting, no doubt, some change in her manner, and guessing that she suspected. And it was very tenderly with his arm about her that he told her: remorsefully, rather letting her guess his wishes than disclosing them; owning freely that he had no right to go, that in even entertaining the plan he was to blame. And as with her face turned from him she listened, giving him no encouragement, and making no reply, ' My own,' he said, ' I would not do it—indeed, I would not do it at this time if I could choose. I would not leave you alone with that before you ! But it is now or never, to leave or to take. I may never have the chance again. They talk of peace in the summer, and with peace——' He broke off, but his gesture of despair betrayed more of his feelings, of his hopes, of his aspirations, than he knew. It declared as plainly as if he had spoken that with peace vanished his last desperate hope of rehabilitation. Still she did not speak; and he had to go on, setting before her, baldly rather than with any colouring, the advantages he hoped to win, the increased pay, the chance of gain if a prize were taken, the employment higher, at least, than that he held. Finally—but by this time his voice dragged—he dwelt upon the shortness of the cruise. He would be at sea no

more than six weeks ; it would soon go. It would pass. He would be back before—before the event, he hoped.

'But you don't go for these things,' she said, breaking her silence at last. She kept her face turned from his, and her voice was cold. 'You don't deceive me. You don't go for these things, I know.'

'If I go,' he said, trying to speak lightly.

'If you go !' she cried, speaking as she had never spoken to him before. 'But you mean to go ! But it is not for these, I know. I know why you go, and why you wish to go.'

He temporised. 'My dear, I hardly know that I wish to go.'

'Oh, yes, you wish to go !' she rejoined bitterly. 'But not for any of the things you name. You think to regain what you have lost. You dream of—of righting yourself. That is all that matters to you. And for that—that dream, that chance in a million, you will fight—fight desperately ! Oh ! I know you. You will run all risks, take all chances for that. For that ! While I wait here !' She strove to retain her self-control, but her voice rose to a tragic note. 'While I wait here, and wait and wait ! No, sir, it is impossible. It is wicked, wicked, and I will not have it ! It was not in the bargain, sir.' She tried to wrest herself from him. 'It was not for this, to be abandoned, and slighted, to be alone and wait, that I gave up all ! I gave it up for you, and I will have you and keep you. I will not lose you ! You shall not go ! You have not the right to go !'

'Then I will not go,' he said.

'You shall not !' she declared, anger still uppermost in her. 'I will not bear it.'

He swallowed something, he strove to play the man. 'Very well,' he said, with as much cheerfulness as he could command. 'Then I will not go. Be it so, dear. Be it so, Peggy. And who knows but some day some other chance may come. We will settle it so, my dear, and—and no more about it.' He forced a laugh. 'You know me too well, Peggy,' he said. And he tried to rally her. 'I have no chance with you. You read me like a book.'

'I should know you,' she said sombrely. 'You are my husband.'

'Then look up, dear,' he said. 'It is over and done with. Smile at me now.'

She clung to him. 'Then you will not go ?' she cried, melting. 'You promise me ? You do promise me ? And you forgive me ? Whom have I but you ?'

He swore that he had nothing to forgive ; he swore that she was right, and gradually and slowly he caressed her into something like tranquillity—hiding his own pangs, swallowing his disappointment manfully. And presently she slept, her bosom still heaving, the tears still on her cheek. Her arm was about him as if she would assure herself, even in her sleep, of his presence. And now and again in her dreams she breathed stormily, the tempest but half spent.

But the man lay long awake, fighting his battle, subduing his will, and striving to set love above self. For it was no easy victory that he had to make good. For him Budgen's offer had raised a very castle in Spain. It had laid a foundation for impossible things, and he had built on that foundation, built high and splendidly, ignoring the probable, losing himself in airy visions, confident of the unlikely and the romantic. Weak men might fail, might come home empty-handed ; but he would not fail. They counted odds, had petty gain for motive, but he who had everything to win would not count heads. There was nothing that he would not dare, nothing of which, once more at sea, with the sweet brig and the swaying deck under his feet, he would not be capable. He had built high and swiftly, he had seen his name flame on an astonished world. A privateer—no more, and little enough he knew that the Service recked of such ! Ay, but his should be such a privateer as men had never dreamed of, never visioned since the days of the fabled and the glorious Fortunatus Wright who, when the navy had failed and sailed away, held the Mediterranean and the Sicilies in fee !

And all this and his high hopes he must resign—for her sake and the sake of the babe that was coming ! He must put away his dream, decline ambition, trample on his last chance. The splendid edifice that fancy had reared, that had charmed his longing eyes for days, wavered, shook, nay, melted into grey mist, leaving all empty, cold and comfortless. Or no, God forgive him for the thought, not comfortless ! He had her, and he loved her and she was precious to him, endeared by gratitude as well as by love. But the man in him prized honour also, and the good word of his fellows, never so highly valued as when lost, and the struggle was hard and bitter. To win through to the resignation that he had promised her, to accept his lot with cheerfulness, and a mien that should never reproach her—this was a hard task for one of his nature ; and again and again he rebelled against his fate, though

he strove to stifle the discontent that would rise in him. No wonder that sleep was long in coming, that he moved restlessly, staring with wakeful eyes into the darkness. But at last he slept.

When he awoke in the morning, roused by some movement near him, he missed Peggy from his side. It was early, the room was still shadowy, and he sat up, sleepy and wondering. Then he saw her. She was standing, a thin wrapper about her, gazing through the window, her figure outlined against the grey light that fell on a patch of bare floor, and on the wall beyond it. He called her by name. ‘What is it, dear?’ he asked. ‘Is anything the matter?’

‘Nothing,’ she said. She turned from the window, and came to his side of the bed and leant over him, putting her arms about him. ‘Nothing, nothing,’ she repeated, but there was a tone and a solemnity in her voice that drove from him the last remains of sleep. ‘Nothing is the matter, dear. All is well. Very well.’

‘But,’ he asked, startled and perplexed, ‘why are you up?’

‘Because I awoke and I could not sleep until I told you. I have been looking at the mist on the water, Charles. You can see nothing. The sea and the point, all are blotted out. You can see nothing. But they are there, we know that; we know that they are there, and as surely as I hold you now the sun will rise and we shall see them again—with the light upon them!’

‘Of course we shall, dear,’ he said, bewildered. ‘Why not? And you are cold, you are shivering! Get into bed!’

‘When I have told you,’ she answered. But she was slow to go on. She drew his head to her heart and held him closely. Then, ‘Charles,’ she said, ‘I was wrong last night, and I see it now—selfish and wicked, thinking only of myself, thinking, oh, so meanly! But to-day I am brave. I am myself, I have looked into the mist, and I know that the light is behind it, I know that the light will shine through presently. I have learned my lesson and I thank God for it. You shall go, you must go. Your wife shall be no coward, no drawback to you. Nor your child. You must go.’

He was awake with a vengeance now. ‘Peggy! Peggy!’ he cried. ‘You do not mean it! You are not yourself, dear!’

‘But I do mean it, and I am myself. I mean it with all my heart. Do you feel my heart, dear, beating against you? Is it not beating strongly, calmly? No, you must go, dear, for my sake

as well as your own. For I see clearly now. I see that it is only so that I can keep you and be sure of you, sure of your love and worthy of it.'

'But—but have you thought?' he protested. For, oh, he could not accept this! He was shaken, shaken by a very rapture of love and remorse. How could he, how dare he take advantage of her—of this? Of the love and self-sacrifice before which he felt himself so mean, so small, and his ambitions and his hopes a nothing? 'Have you thought? For there is a risk. You know, dear, there is. I may not, you know I may not—'

'Come back? No, I know,' she said. Her voice trembled, but it grew full and strong again. 'I know, Charles. And have I thought? Oh! have I not? You may not come back. But do you not see, dear, dear love, that I lose you either way, and better, oh, better,' she cried, tears in her voice, 'far better this way! I give you that I may keep you—keep your love, living or dead, keep you whole, entire, all my own! No, Charles, you must go, you must go!' She repeated it, swaying herself a little, holding him closer and closer to her in a passion of abnegation. 'And God give you back to me, as I believe He will! The mist may lie long, but it will rise some day, and you will be mine, my very own!'

He was in her arms, but in his heart he was at her feet, humbling himself in the dust before her, owning the majesty of her love. 'Oh, Peggy! Peggy!' he cried in a tone that was precious to her. 'What shall I say to you? How shall I be worthy of you? Oh, my dear, I am selfish. I am selfishness itself, if I take you at your word. I am a brute to wish to go. Think! Think again, dear. Say nothing now. Let us wait. There is a risk. God knows there is a risk if I go.'

'You will go to regain what you have lost,' she said firmly. 'You will go to do your duty. I understand, I know, Charles. You go to fight; I stay to wait and pray. I am a sailor's wife, and not the first. But I have counted the cost and I hold you cheap at it.' She met his eyes and tried to smile, nay, she did smile. 'I see clearly now. There is but this one way for you and for me.'

He held her to him, but all that the man, unmanned, could say was 'Peggy! Peggy!' as he drew her face down to his breast and held her close. 'Oh, Peggy! Peggy!'

But his clasp told her all, and already she had some foretaste of her reward.

## CHAPTER XX.

AND giving, the young wife did not give by halves. Love's wisdom told her that a grudging gift is a vain sacrifice, and heavy as her heart was that morning she did not let her fears cloud her face. She forced herself to be cheerful, she smiled across the breakfast table, and—last effort of courage—when the meal was over she sang as she went about her household work. The old man was deceived, for he was a simple soul ; and for her husband, though she could not impose upon him who had so lately read her heart, her fortitude inspired and her cheerfulness consoled him. As her eyes followed him down the path to the Cove she marked the lightness of his step, and she thanked God for the courage that had been given to her.

But the bravest spirit has its moments of weakness. There followed days when the sea did not, a shield of blinding silver, mirror the sun's splendour, when hail rattled against the streaming panes, and the south-wester, storming by the walls, beat down the fuchsia beside the door. Days, too, when fog grey and depressing hid the world, and the sound of the caulking-mallets rising out of it seemed to listening ears as the knell of hammers on coffins. And he was absent and busy, borne away on the stream of life, engaged every hour in the job of fitting-out the brig, of checking stores, of setting up rigging. He hurried to and fro, and the day was too short for him, too short for fears and well-nigh for regret.

But for Peggy the woman's task of waiting had already begun. She sat at home, and she was alone. She might make and mend for him, she might bend over the stout rig-and-furrow that grew upon her twinkling needles, but she must needs think. Though she let no row fall that was not close and true as love could make it, the task was still too short. And, the task done, what remained to her but to think and tremble at her thoughts ?

All this she had the strength to hide from him. Welcoming him, noon and night, with smiles, she listened with hard-won patience to the tale of the day's doings, to the successes and failures that filled his thoughts, but for her ranked only as they retarded or advanced the inevitable parting. She questioned, smiled, and played her part. But there were times when the ordeal was almost more than she could bear, when she could have screamed aloud. There were other times when, her heart full to bursting, she longed to give way, to weep her fill and be comforted.

And one day when the preparations were well advanced the sympathy that she read in Charlotte Bicester's eyes proved too much for her. It was a Sunday afternoon and the visitor had come in when the men were abroad. Charlotte marked the quivering lip, the fluttering hands, the piteous eyes, saw that there was something amiss and questioned Peggy. In a few minutes the tale was told and the young wife was pouring out her soul in her friend's arms.

Charlotte was never slow to wax hot, and she flamed out. 'But he must not go!' she cried, as if that closed the matter. 'He shall not go! It is cruel, wicked, most wicked, child! He shall not leave you.'

'No, no,' Peggy sobbed. 'He must go.'

'He must not!' Charlotte declared, fired with indignation in her friend's cause. 'I never heard of such a thing! At this moment when you are—— No! No! Certainly he cannot go. I will see to it, dear.'

But that was not at all what Peggy wanted. Pity she claimed and a word of sympathy—and a good cry. But no one must arraign him, no one must come between them. The storm sank as quickly as it had arisen; she disengaged herself, and mopped her eyes. 'No, dear,' she said with dignity, 'we have considered it, and he is right to go. Quite right. I wish it. I would not keep him if I could.'

'Not keep him! I don't believe it!'

'No, certainly not,' Peggy said, bristling up, and as ready to fight as she had been to weep. 'No, certainly not. We are in full agreement about it, Charlotte. He must go, and he is right to go. But,' weakening and turning tearful eyes on her friend, 'it almost breaks my heart to let him go.'

'And yet you let him go?'

'Of course! But you cannot understand.'

Charlotte thought that she did understand. She did not believe Peggy. 'The man is a wretch!' she thought. 'An unfeeling, ungrateful wretch to talk of leaving her!' Still she ceased to argue and confined herself to administering the comfort that Peggy needed and that gradually brought back a smile to her face.

None the less Charlotte left the cottage determined that the thing should not be. Her friend should not be sacrificed, she should not be racked and tormented. Heavens, had not the child suffered enough? Had she not given up enough, offered enough—

father, sister, friends, position on—the altar of this man ? Was she never to have peace ? Charlotte burned to speak her mind to some one, and in her indignation would have gone that moment to the Cove and brought the offender to book. But Peggy, smiling through her tears and much the better for the break-down, saw her from the door, and Charlotte dared not turn towards the Cove lest the other should divine her purpose. Still her resolution held ; it was but putting off the matter for a few hours, she thought.

And then in Beremouth, at the point where the road over the headland left the street, she met Sir Albery, coming, as she supposed, from the Rectory, and in a trice and with her usual impulsiveness she decided that he was the proper person to interfere. A moment's thought might have induced even Charlotte to doubt the wisdom of this, but she did not allow herself the moment. She poured out her story, and heated to a white heat by her recital, ‘Isn’t it a burning shame ?’ she cried. ‘Isn’t it the last straw ?’ Then as he did not reply, ‘Did you know of this ?’ she asked, prepared to denounce him if he differed from her. ‘Monstrous, I call it ! Surely you didn’t, or you would have done something.’

Wyke’s face was grave. ‘I heard two days ago,’ he said, ‘that he was likely to go.’

‘And you have done nothing !’

‘I ?’ His tone said as plainly as possible—What have I to do with it ?

And that would have closed the matter for most people, but Charlotte was of stouter stuff. ‘Yes, you !’ she retorted. ‘Why not ? You were fond of her !’

He reddened with vexation. ‘Miss Bicester, you go too far !’ he said. ‘You forget that—that Mrs. Bligh is another man’s wife.’

‘Oh !’ Charlotte rose in her scorn. ‘And that being so, you wash your hands of her ! You don’t care what happens to her ! That’s it, is it ?’

Really the girl was beyond bearing ! Exasperated, he ground the point of his stick into the ground. ‘But what are you in it ?’ he protested, with an irritation that was natural in the circumstances. ‘What is it to you, Miss Bicester ? Why are you for ever taking up their cause and—and troubling about them ?’

It was Charlotte’s turn to redden. ‘Why ?’ she exclaimed. ‘Why ? I thought I had told you once. Because I was her friend, and I am not like some, I stick. I don’t turn my back and say it is no business of mine, because she’s down ! Because she’s poor

and all her fine friends have sent her to Coventry ! She's going to have a baby—I suppose I should not know it, but I do—and this will about kill her ! And am I to stand by and do nothing like all the rest, like her good-for-nothing sister, whom I would like to shake ! And like—well, I won't say that. Only I won't stand, for one, and see this. It will kill her, I tell you. Do you understand that ?'

For a moment Charlotte's anger raised her almost to the pitch of comeliness, and Wyke eyed her whimsically, discovering something new and surprising in her. 'There are not many friends like you, Miss Bicester,' he said as if he were forced to say it.

'Then I would not call them friends,' she retorted scornfully. 'Friends, indeed ! I would not give that for them !' and she snapped her fingers. 'But we are off the point. The point is, Sir Albery, are you going to do anything ? That is what I want to know.'

He hesitated. 'It is a fair risk,' he said. 'I don't see that it is any more.'

But she had her answer. 'If it were his risk, may be ! You may depend upon it, it would not trouble me—fair or unfair. But it is her risk I'm thinking about. He may not be worth much, but she has bought him dearly, and is she to lose him ? Is she to live in fear and anguish, for it is nothing better, and be broken-hearted at last ? The man has the feelings of a stone to think of it ! No one but a brute would treat her so !'

'But I thought,' he said, smiling, 'that you liked him.'

Charlotte cooled down. 'Well, I did,' she admitted.

'Then why do you think so ill of him now ?'

She hesitated. 'Because I've seen her,' she said. 'And she is breaking her heart about it. The man has no right to go !'

'But what can I do ? What do you want me to do ?'

'Speak to him. Put it before him. Tell him what you think of him. What her friends think of him.'

Wyke frowned. 'You don't know what you ask,' he said. 'Come between husband and wife ? And I—I of all people ? You don't know what you are asking.'

But Charlotte was firm. 'Yes, I do,' she said. 'I ask you to act, and I say you have the right to act. You more than anyone.'

'Surely less than anyone,' he protested, reddening. 'You put me in a false position. I step out of my place ! Step out of it damnable ! Damnably !' he repeated. 'It is impossible.'

'And yet you will do it.'

'If I do, I am a fool!'

'Then be a fool!' cried this odd girl. 'And you may be thankful all your life you were!'

He looked down the quiet Sunday street in which they were the only loiterers, and annoyance was written large on his face. 'Well, I'll see,' he said at last, and grudgingly. 'But I have told you what I think. I think the whole thing wrong. Quite wrong!'

'And yet you'll do it,' she replied. 'I leave it to you.' And before he could repeat his refusal she turned and hurried away, leaving him to digest the business as best he might.

'I shall do nothing of the kind,' he said, looking after her; and having given a minute to gloomy reflection, he followed her along the street. But when he had covered a hundred yards at a pace that grew slower with every yard, he stopped. 'D—n the girl!' he muttered. He turned and went back, and with dragging steps he made for the churchyard and the walk that ran over the headland. He could not make up his mind. He did not mean to do anything—the girl was mad! But he might as well go that way and—and see. She had put it on him, confound her—and if anything happened? He had an unhappy vision of Peggy, white-faced, piteous, fear-stricken, staring at him with appealing eyes.

Once he stood. And once he turned and went back a few paces. The thing was absurd, impossible; it was no business of his. But he went on. Five minutes saw him over the point, and within sight of the cottage; and there, as luck would have it, he saw Bligh coming up from the Cove, and still on the farther side of the wicket-gate. There the man was, and if the thing was to be done, if it were not altogether impossible—— Wyke quickened his pace that he might meet the other before he entered.

'Can I have a word with you?' he said. He would fain have said it in a tone of goodwill, but he spoke with constraint. He could not help it.

Bligh on his side did not bless the meeting. Chance had from time to time brought the two men face to face in the town, and they had passed with a silent greeting. But since the day when they had met at the wedding they had never spoken. To escape, however, was impossible. 'Yes,' he replied, not without dignity, 'if you wish it.'

'I hear,' Wyke said, 'that you are going out with the *Peggy*. May I ask if that is true?'

Bligh nodded.

'It is true, then ?'

'It is. What of it ?' He was on his guard, watchful and a little suspicious.

'Only this,' Wyke replied, hardening his heart, 'but I think it is a thing that should weigh with you. And I think it is a thing that I have a right to say, Mr. Bligh. I can enter into your feelings, and I understand why you wish to go. No, hear me out, I beg,' he continued, as he saw that Bligh was preparing to interrupt him. 'There must be risk, and I dare say a good deal of risk. Have you the right to run that risk ? Your wife——'

'Oh, that's it,' Bligh said, not very pleasantly. 'That's it, is it ? You are thinking of her, Sir Albery.'

Wyke's colour rose, but he answered firmly. 'Yes,' he said, 'I am.'

Bligh could hardly have been blamed if he had resented the intrusion ; indeed the words, 'Had you not better mind your own business ?' rose to his lips. But his better nature or his respect for the man, or possibly the scruples that he had felt prevailed. He stood a moment silent. Then, 'Is that all ?' he asked.

'It covers all,' the other answered. 'I think you ought to consider her. I think you ought to remember, Mr. Bligh, that your life is no longer yours to risk, and that you have no right to risk it or to inflict on her the anguish and the possible loss that this venture may cost her. No, man—you have not the right !' he repeated more warmly.

'And I might answer,' Bligh rejoined—but he said it with a smile—'that you have not the right to come between us.'

Sir Albery winced. 'To come between you, no,' he said. 'God forbid ! But to speak to you as I am speaking, yes.' And then, with a fine simplicity, 'I loved her,' he said. 'She has chosen you, 'but I loved her and I would spare her.'

Bligh nodded. 'I own your right,' he said. 'But what if she wishes—if it is her own wish that I should go ?'

'In that case there is no more to be said. If she wishes it.'

'We will ask her,' Bligh rejoined, rising to the other's level. 'She shall tell you herself what she wishes.'

Wyke had not counted on this, and he drew back. He had a horror of facing her, and a dread of what he would see. 'Oh, but,' he protested, 'I did not mean—if you tell me it is so——'

But Bligh waved that aside. ‘We will ask her,’ he repeated. He signed to the other to go first, and Wyke, with mingled anger and vexation at the position in which he had placed himself, gave way. He had prepared himself for hard words, for a clash, but he had not foreseen this, and he felt himself caught. He was a shy as well as a proud man, and he would have given a large sum to be spared the scene that awaited him. But he could not refuse, and he passed through the gate that the other held back.

Bligh pushed open the door. ‘Are you there, Peggy?’ he asked, raising his voice. ‘I am bringing you a visitor. Here is Sir Albery Wyke. He wishes to ask you a question.’

Peggy was bending over the table, busy about some household task, and she had just that much warning and no more. She looked up, she saw her old lover hesitating on the threshold, and the blood flew to her face. She had not spoken to him since the day when he had stood behind her at her marriage, a grim, silent witness, and memories of that day and of his suit clothed her with shame. But though her face burned she held up her head bravely, and Bligh told himself with pride that he would not have her look other than she did.

Probably Sir Albery suffered more than she suffered. He bowed, muttering something incoherent about an intrusion, and her husband’s wish. He turned resentfully to Bligh.

‘It’s about my sailing with the *Peggy*,’ Bligh said. Of the three he was the most at his ease. ‘Sir Albery is troubled about it, and it is good of him to be so. I have told him that I have left the decision to you, and that if you are against my sailing I will not go!’

Peggy knitted her brow. ‘Well?’ she said. If she understood she did not show it.

‘He wishes to hear from your lips, dear, if you are willing.’

‘That you should go?’

‘Yes.’

Peggy did not blench. ‘But I have told you so,’ she said, frowning. The blush had faded from her cheek and she seemed to Sir Albery to be pale and changed. But she spoke firmly. ‘It is at my wish that he does go,’ she continued. ‘If it had lain with him he would not have gone. But, for me—would you have me keep him here idle, wasted, clerking for that man? Do you think that he was made for that, to live out his life under a cloud, to pay all his life for a single mistake, to rust down there with the old moorings

and the worn-out boats ? Do you think,' she repeated, her voice rising proudly, 'that I married him for that ? To fetter him and bind him, my love no better than the green weed that hangs about those rotting timbers ? Shall I take all and give nothing ? No, let him go ! ' Peggy's voice rang with something approaching exultation. ' Let him go whatever it cost ! Better, far better to lose him, if it be God's will, than to be a stay and a clog upon him ! Let him go and let him prove, if the chance be given him, that the world has been unjust to him ! '

Bligh turned to Sir Albery. He smiled. ' Are you satisfied ? ' he asked. But his voice was unsteady.

' There is no more to be said,' Wyke muttered. He was amazed, silenced, awe-stricken. ' God give you and her a good deliverance.' Habit put the words into his mouth, and he used them and added nothing to them. Nor did he make any show of leave-taking, but turned and went out as in a dream.

They had risen above him, far above him ! Or she had ! He felt it, he owned it. She had reached a plane beyond his strength, if not his conception, and he acknowledged it with awe. As he returned over the point he met men who saluted him respectfully, but he went by unseeing. That was not the Squire's custom, and the men stared after him, and saw that as he climbed the hill he made strange odd gestures with his cane. They thought him mazed, and they wondered.

## CHAPTER XXI.

BUDGEN'S COVE lay so snugly sheltered behind the headland that it kept its secrets, and Budgen was no talker. But there are things that cannot be hidden long. The bilge-pumps and the caulkers' mallets had voices if Budgen had not, and the reek of the first sizzling tar-kettle had barely got the better of the tang of the seaweed and the various smells of the foreshore before it was rumoured on the other side of the point that something was afoot. From that to the knowledge that the *Lively Peggy* was to sail was but a step.

The news made a stir that was not confined to Beremouth. It reached the ship-chandlers in Plymouth and the armourers in Devonport ; it moved the fish-curers on the giddy steeps of Saltash. For Letters of Marque were good customers. They sailed well-

armed—for fighting, when it could not be avoided, was their trade—and well-found, for something like equality reigned aboard and the fo'c'sle looked to live on more than hard-tack and salt horse. Men with samples, men with lists, men with oily voices, shadowed Budgen, waylaid him on his doorstep, and were heartily cursed for their pains.

But that which was a mere question of profit to the Three Towns was for Beremouth a thing of both profit and pride. The taverns that of late had scored much on the slates behind their doors looked to have them cleared out of the men's advances—and other scores run up, for would not every soul in the place drink to the success of the venture? Then if all went well there would be more money when the crew came back with lined pockets. Coopers hooped casks, and sail-makers, squatting on their hams, sewed cloths; for others there were odd jobs about the brig and always the hope of a prize to flood the little port with gold, or the things that made gold—laces and cognac, Lyons silks and Bordeaux wines—a flood that would irrigate many a thirsty channel.

But in Beremouth itself the hope of profit stood second to pride. The town was bestirring itself to wipe off its disgrace. It was lifting its head again, to compete with Falmouth and Plymouth and Dartmouth. It was once again sending forth its ship to harass the hated foreigners who closed their ports to its pilchards and herrings; and sending it forth with just as much chance of a prize as its neighbours. Not a man on the quay with its weedy fish-crates and crab-pots but saw just beyond the offing a main strewn with merchantmen and golden with argosies, all waiting to be taken by the first comer. And then how great the glory, how fine the story, how shrill the cock-crowing over Yealmpton and Torbay and Brixton! There would not be a tavern, a Sailors' Rest or a Hole in the Wall from Portland Bill to the Manacles that would not ring with the tale of a good capture, wiping out the unlucky memory of the last fiasco.

Men held their heads higher, and walked more briskly, smiling as they walked. Old salts not often seen upon the street, shy, ringleted men who lodged in Beremouth, holding it safer than Plymouth where the press-gang worked, showed themselves openly, spat on their hands and sought secret interviews with Budgen. The very children chanted that the *Peggy* was going out, and on most days there would be half a dozen groups watching from the churchyard walk the workers in the Cove.

But fame is a fickle thing, and though the name was in all mouths, not one in a hundred, strange to say, thought of the girl now living humbly in their midst, in whose honour the brig had been christened. Some were ignorant of the fact. Others had forgotten it. Her nine-days' romance had sunk merged in dull every-day life, and if one here or there did recall her association with the thing of beauty that day by day, as casks and bales went aboard, floated lower in the water, it was much.

Amid all this one secret was well kept. Men wondered who was to command. Budgen was dumb, the Rector was too formidable to be questioned, and the Cove was as ignorant as the town. Budgen had sworn to Dr. Portnal that the crew would sail with Bligh, but the wish had been father to the thought, for not a man from Barney Toll to the galley-drudge had been consulted. Nine out of ten believed that, wife or no wife, Ozias would sail. That was the common talk. But when Ozias came round from Plymouth to hear all about the matter, there was an end of that. He brought with him a buxom, black-eyed Devon woman who very soon proved in no equivocal fashion that she had a hold on Copestake's shirt-tails that forbade the thought of escape.

'No, Ozias don't do any more privateering,' she declared to an admiring throng in the Keppel Head. 'Nor no such ungodly work! He don't step across the quay without his wedded wife, nor go aboard so much as a cockboat. He's converted is Ozias. He sees the error of his ways. He's a man o' peace, and high time too!'

Ozias groaned. 'It's deadly work for sure,' he said. 'Deadly to the soul it is! There's nights I canna sleep for thinking o' the men, poor benighted creatures, cursing and swearing in the jaws of hell. It's a crowning mercy I were not cut off. Though, lads,' he added softly, 'I were always careful—careful.'

'Ay, and you'll be more careful now,' Mrs. Ozias said darkly.

From amid the throng of hairy, sunburnt men, some with kerchiefs about their heads and pig-tails at their necks, on whom the naked lamp, hung from the ceiling, cast a fierce light, a shrill voice issued. 'But to fight the French, missus? I never heard as 'twas anything but lawful!'

With one spacious gesture Mrs. Ozias cleared a space before her. She set her arms akimbo, and if no one else trembled Ozias did. 'Now who be you?' she asked. 'Let me see you, little man!' And as the crowd fell back and disclosed the unfortunate Fewster, who had piped up, fancying himself safe in obscurity, 'Let me see

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you !' the terrible woman continued. ' And how much fighting o' the French ha' you done ? But I see. You be one o' them random neck-or-nothing fire-eaters as cursed at the guns while Ozias was in his sins ! A bloody-minded limb of Satan never content but with a linstock in your hands ! A' breathing fire and slaughter ! It's written on you plain what you be, my man ! One o' those as set Ozias astray you be !'

Now no one in all Beremouth looked less like a desperado than Joe ; a rag of a man, who, as everybody knew, had never been out of sight of land in his life. So the room rocked with Homeric laughter. But Joe whether drunk or sober was of the vainest, and he did not see the joke. Stung by the sarcasm, he broke into 'language,' cursing his limbs and all that was his if he wasn't as ready to fight the French as another ! ' I'd go to-morrow,' he raved, ' and I will go, sink me if I don't ! You're a set of fools ! Fools and gabies ! '

' Well, you'd best go,' Mrs. Ozias retorted, contemptuous in her strength. ' But you don't list Ozias in your crew, my little bantam cock—crow as loud as you like ! '

The room rocked anew at the notion of Joe's crew. One clapped another on the back and swore he would sign on. ' But he's greater with a quart pot than a linstock, is Joe ! ' cried a stentorian voice.

' Oh, lord, I do see Joe 'mid smoke and slaughter ! ' hiccupped the man next him, and smacked Joe on the back till he reeled.

Assailed on all sides Joe spattered the crowd with wild words, crying that he'd show them, he'd go, he'd fight the French as well as another ! But his weak passion and his oaths only provoked fresh diversion. Even those who every day drank at Joe's cost laughed with the loudest.

He broke away at last, almost weeping with rage, and made for the door. But before he passed it he planted a dart that rankled. ' Any way, if I took a Frenchman I'd not sink her in harbour ! ' he shouted. ' And how many of you shirkers owe your lives to me ! Asleep and drunk you were, and the water washing you ! And I saved you, you swabs, you lubbers, you thickheads ! '

Perhaps it was well for him that the door closed on his last word. ' Well,' Ozias said, fairly mazed at finding himself wounded by so puny an opponent, ' he be a scorpion ! Surelie the poison of asps is under his lips ! '

However, Joe gone, the merriment died down. Some one raised the question of the skipper, and, assured that Ozias was not the man,

they debated it. Those who knew least leaned to Barney Toll, who was not present ; they could think of no one else. But the wiser, and Ozias with them, shook their heads ; they knew Barney's limitations, and that, stout seaman as he was, a land-fall and a faculty of shooting the sun were not within them. 'He be at Budgen's now,' Ozias commented. 'But he knows no more than we do, does Barney.'

'Well, I'd want to know,' said one with deliberation, 'fore I slung my hammock.'

'Ay, ay.'

'And 'taint every one I'd go with, lads. The skipper's every man's meat.'

'Or poison, Zekiel ! You're right. Sure, us'll have a word to say to he.'

A strong feeling ran that way ; men shook their heads. One suggested that those concerned should march to Budgen's in a body and have it out with him. 'Twon't do to sail with a pig in a poke ! No, indeed,' said Ezekiel, something puffed up. 'If 'twere Ozias, now——'

'Ay, my lad,' Mrs. Ozias said, 'but it ain't Ozias, and you may swear to it and not choke yourself ! None o' that, d'ye hear ?'

Zekiel collapsed, and no one seemed to be particularly eager to beard Budgen. Then the door opened and Barney came in, and was hailed with loud cries. He was the man to tackle Budgen, he was the lad ! They put it to him, one speaking before another.

Barney set down the pot that had been thrust into his grasp, and wiped his mouth with a powder-blackened hand. 'Another pot !' he said coolly, and not until he held it would he speak. Then, 'No use to go to Budgen,' he said. 'You'll soon know what you want to know. The old man's told me not an hour ago, and not afore 'twas time, by Jehoshaphat.'

'Then who is it, Barney ?' They leaned forward, eager to learn. But Barney, feeling the greatness of the moment, was in no haste to speak. At last, 'Well, 'tis the Lieutenant,' he said.

'Bligh !'

'Ay, it be young Bligh.'

No one spoke. Devon men are cautious and think slowly. They are slow if sure, and one and all they looked to Ozias. 'Well,' he said at last, his eyes on the drink he held in his hand, 'I think 'twill do. I think 'twill do. What do you say, Barney ?'

'I think as you do, Ozias,' Barney replied solemnly, with a ruminating eye on his liquor. 'Not as I'm wedded to him, nor saying there mightn't be better—such as you, Cap'en. But then again I'm thinking there might be worse.'

A dissentient yet a doubtful voice put in a word. 'I'm not liking these silk-stockin' gentlemen, if you ask me,' it said.

A murmur showed that the speaker had his supporters—rash men. But Ozias shook his head. 'There's silk stockings and there's silk stockings,' he said sagely. 'As Barney knows well. And some runs and reeves and some don't—same as woollen. But I'm thinking if 'tis to be a Beremouth man, as well him as another. That's my 'pinion. I don't know,' he added magnanimously, 'as Budgen could ha' done better.'

'If he don't use his epplets over us!'

'There you're wrong, my lad,' Ozias said sharply. 'Tight hand, safe hand. Fo'c'sle orders, it's good sea lore, spells raffle atop and a white lee shore! And you mind it, Zekiel. No, I'm thinking he'll do. He'll give you your bellyful of fighting, and what's lost 'won't be for lack of a look-out!' But with that, unregenerate memory captured Ozias's thoughts and his eyes began to sparkle. 'D'you mind, Barney,' he continued, 'that time, 'twas off Peniche with the Berlings abeam and a sea, when we sighted——' But at that point his gaze met his wedded wife's, the sparkle died out of his eyes and Ozias groaned. 'Ah, 'twas sinful work,' he said meekly, 'sinful work, as I should know, and be thankful as I was not cut off in my sins.'

'You're right there,' said Mrs. Ozias briskly. 'But you needn't fear no more, Ozias. I'll see as you're no backslider.'

'No, Ozias,' said a tactless voice—needless to say the speaker was near the door. 'You'll never ship along o' them tubs no more! The missus will see to that, Ozias!'

(*To be continued.*)

*THOMAS HARDY: NOVELIST AND POET.*  
BY GEORGE KING.

Not a few famous writers have succeeded in annexing large tracts of English soil. Shakespeare and George Eliot share Warwickshire; Sir Walter Scott, who holds an almost undisputed sway in Scotland, has invaded many a county this side of the Tweed; Wordsworth and Coleridge have taken possession of the Lake district; the Brontës have appropriated Yorkshire; Dickens has made a conquest not only of London but of Kent; Tennyson has set his mark upon the low-lying shore of Lincolnshire. No novelist or poet has created so definite, so intimate, an association with any portion of England as Hardy has established in the south-western corner. Nowhere has imagination acquired so firm a tenure in so large a territory. Though Dorsetshire—where, in the little village of Upper Bockington, the last of the great Victorians was born—has remained the most populous part of it, the kingdom of his novels has been largely expanded since the ancient name of Wessex was revived in ‘Far from the Madding Crowd.’ It stretches, this fair and goodly land which Hardy’s genius has made his own, from Windsor and Oxford in the east to Bristol and Boscastle in the west; it includes such familiar resorts as Southsea, Bournemouth, Swanage, and Weymouth along the south coast; among its inland towns are Salisbury, Winchester, Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Dorchester and Exeter. To the true lover of the Wessex novels these are almost unfamiliar names. So vivid are the scenes in the novels, so alive are the characters they present, that he is inclined to think of the real places by their fictitious titles. No shepherd that ever tended sheep on the Dorset hills was half as real as Gabriel Oak; no municipal being that ever occupied the mayoral chair of Dorchester had half the vitality of the Mayor of Casterbridge. And the Hardy country is as much a part of the Hardy novels as the men and women whom Hardy’s genius has summoned into life.

Here, leading into Sherborne, is the leaf-strewn road along which Marty South went her weary way to sell her chestnut locks, and there, close to Minterne Magna, stands the house of the fashionable lady who, noticing in church that the peasant girl’s tresses matched her own, had cast a covetous eye upon them.

Just outside Piddletown is the farm where Sergeant Troy fascinated Bathsheba Everdene, and Gabriel Oak wooed and eventually won her. Upon this road near Pentridge went Tess on her fateful ride with Alec D'Urberville ; there, in the valley of the Frome, lies the farmstead where she met Angel Clare ; on the hill outside Winchester stands the grim building from which was raised the black flag that proclaimed the tragic close of her more tragic life. Here, not far from Poole, is the heath on which Eustacia Vye lit her bonfires to catch the eager eye of Damon Wildeve. At this spacious inn in Dorchester the astonished wife of Michael Henchard, whom he had sold to a sailor twenty years before, beheld him seated in the mayoral chair. Here, at Fawley Magna, the ambitious Jude saw with yearning eyes the light of Oxford reflected in the sky, and there, in Shaftesbury, is the house from which Sue Bridehead, leaping from the window, escaped from her husband's side. So, with the aid of a local map, you can wend your way all through the region which gives unity to the Wessex novels.

Not that Hardy is dependent upon the district which he has peopled with his creations. Genius is greater than geography, though local conditions may give it bent and colour. If Warwickshire had been the only English county not to emerge from the Flood, England might still have had its Shakespeare. Dorsetshire is not the only county in which, below the simple surface of rustic life, occur 'dramas of a grandeur and unity truly Sophoclean.' This varied tract of country, with its impressive relics of pre-historic times, giving a sharp sense of the continuity of things, lends itself readily, no doubt, to Hardy's sympathy and skill, yet Yorkshire or Kent, had either been his birthplace, would have served his purpose almost as well. For, although, in one sense, he is the most local of all English novelists, yet, with his deep knowledge of the human qualities to which no county boundaries have been set, he takes as large a province as Fielding, Scott, Thackeray, Dickens and Meredith. It is not merely Dorsetshire traditions that find artistic expression in his books. He holds, like all the great creative artists, a passport to the continent of the emotions ; he is a freeman of the city of the soul. You can enjoy his consummate art without having set foot in his beloved Wessex. It is possible, after all, to appreciate the beauty of the Sermon on the Mount without having journeyed to Palestine and—to take a much homelier analogy—to enjoy the cosy comforts of the chimney-corner without having visited a well-known northern port.

'The English,' says Washington Irving, 'are strongly gifted with the rural feeling.' In George Eliot's earlier novels, in '*Adam Bede*' and '*The Mill on the Floss*', from which, perhaps, both in their choice of material and in their sense of destiny, Hardy derived some inspiration, this rural feeling was expressed with rare insight and force, but when Hardy began his course as a novelist in 1871 George Eliot had long turned from rustic to metaphysical things, and English fiction had lost its pastoral touch. Not the least of his achievements was to revive it. By no novelist has the rural feeling been expressed so copiously and artistically as by the author of '*Far from the Madding Crowd*' and '*The Woodlanders*'. His first book, '*Desperate Remedies*', failed to strike this distinctive note. It is the kind of story which, if only the human mind were capable of contemplating such a combination, George Eliot and Wilkie Collins might have written in collaboration.

'Under the Greenwood Tree,' with its sensitive love of nature and its quaint old village musicians, afforded the first glimpse of Hardy's great gifts as an interpreter of outdoor life and a master of rustic comedy. His genius, like his country, is undulating; the highway of his achievement not infrequently dips. '*Under the Greenwood Tree*', for all its idyllic charm a very slight story, was followed by '*A Pair of Blue Eyes*', which, although it has one of the most attractive of Hardy's heroines, yet is mainly interesting because of its promise of the attainment in the greater novels.

Immediately after it, indeed, came one of the six great books with which Hardy has permanently enriched the realm of English fiction. It was in '*Far from the Madding Crowd*' that his intimate knowledge of rural life, his remarkable power of vivid portraiture, his dramatic use of the passions, and his fine sense of craftsmanship, were first brought into full employment and harmony. Here there was a sharp decline. '*The Hand of Ethelberta*', in which a lively and lovely girl, sprung from peasant stock, becomes the mistress of a household in which her brother and sister are the servants, is the most artificial of all the Wessex novels, and is most unsuccessful where London and not the country is the scene of action. Again the highway—to keep to the simile—takes a mighty rise. '*The Return of the Native*', with its incomparable picture of Egdon Heath and its masterly handling of the troubled lives spent within its sombre influence, represents almost the highest point of Hardy's genius.

There is a descent to '*The Trumpet Major*', in which the rustic

fear of invasion in the Napoleonic period is the subject of some of the best comedy in all Hardy's books, but which, however attractive in design and style, is considerably below the higher plane of his achievement. In '*A Laodicean*', though it has a most attractive opening in its baptism scene in a little chapel, and in '*Two on a Tower*', notwithstanding its many fine strokes of portraiture and its characteristic touch of destiny, the decline is continued.

A swift and grand ascent leads to '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*', '*The Woodlanders*', and '*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*', and no author, except Scott, has written in succession three novels belonging to the same high level. Again there is a fall. In '*The Well-Beloved*', the fantastic story of a sculptor in search of a feminine soul, a kind of Wandering Jew of the love-world, who loves successively a beautiful woman of humble birth, her daughter and her granddaughter, the long arm of coincidence is almost wrenched from its socket. Once more the highway mounts, and with '*Jude the Obscure*', which was published some thirty years ago, ends, apart from additions to his volumes of short stories, Hardy's record as a novelist. '*Jude the Obscure*', which deals with sex problems with rare and deliberate frankness, is a book which lends itself to misunderstanding as well as to criticism, and the reception it obtained seems to have so affected its sensitive author that his pen as a writer of fiction became still.

Not that Hardy's pen remained idle during these thirty years. Several volumes of verse, in which, for the most part, the gloom of his later novels is made more visible, are to be added to his record, though they have not, perhaps, added much to his fame. Hardy's great contemporary was really a poet as well as a novelist; but while George Meredith's poems form an integral part of his reputation—form, indeed, the most enduring part of it—Thomas Hardy's contributions to poetry can scarcely be accounted more than incidental to his. They are the by-products of his artistic life. Much of his poetry is thoughtful, dramatic, and satiric, but, written without any regard to the niceties of poetic art, most of it is little more than prose in disguise. Are there any of his admirers who, looking at one of his volumes of verse, can refrain from thinking: 'There, by the wilfulness of the great novelist, goes a novel wasted'?

Hardy's one memorable achievement since he abandoned novel-writing is '*The Dynasts*', a great spectacular drama dealing with the Napoleonic wars, which in the colossal character of its design is without a parallel in English literature. It occupies

five hundred closely printed pages, consists of nineteen acts and one hundred and thirty scenes and covers a period of ten years. A panorama rather than a play, it presents in vivid flashes all the famous scenes of the 'vast international tragedy' of a century ago. The death of Nelson, the field of Austerlitz, the defeat of the Prussians at Jena, the death of Sir John Moore at Coruña, the triumphs of Wellington in the Peninsula, the divorce of Josephine, the retreat from Moscow, the escape from Elba, the ballroom at Brussels, the battle of Waterloo—all these familiar events are picturesquely and powerfully chronicled. The leading figures in this clash of nations include not only the Royal folk, the mighty seamen and the great soldiers, but also the English politicians who played their part in it, such as Pitt, Sheridan and Fox, whose speeches in the House of Commons are done into blank verse with a fidelity and exactness to which the author—alas, that a poet should deem it necessary!—proudly calls attention in a footnote. Amid all these kings, warriors and statesmen—amid, too, all the empresses and finely-gowned ladies who strut and languish on this gigantic stage—are some of Hardy's own Wessex peasants, whose apprehension of an invasion on the Dorset coast gives a welcome touch of humour to the drama. Above this wonderful medley of historic and homely figures, playing an even more important part in the tragic scenes, hover choruses of supernatural beings, who discuss the shifting course of events and predict their issue. Through the speeches of these busy phantoms runs the real spirit of the play. It is a stupendous study in fatalism. Not to Napoleon nor to Wellington belongs the principal place among the *dramatis personae*, but to that mysterious force which men call Fate. Is Napoleon to be blamed for making the world a fermentation?

‘Some force within me, baffling my intent,  
Harries me onward, whether I will or no,  
My star, my star is what’s to blame—not I.  
It is answerable.’

From the high regions from which 'the Spirit of the Years' look down upon a struggling and a blundering world even the most ambitious rulers

‘Are in the elemental ages’ chart  
Like meanest insects on obscurest leaves’

—a chastening thought, perhaps, for another Emperor in exile who

has impudently claimed a sort of junior partnership with the Deity in these later days.

Not alone in this sense of destiny, in this working out of the will of Fate, is 'The Dynasts' characteristic of its author. Hardy, in dealing with the largest things, never forgets the smallest. 'The Chorus of the Years,' foreseeing the tragic close of Napoleon's hopes at Waterloo, predict how the little, harmless inhabitants of the battlefield—the rabbits, the birds, the worms and the butterflies—will suffer in the shock of arms. It is a happy stroke worthy of the author of 'The Woodlanders.' None of his verse reaches a higher level of poetical feeling, though even here some of the lines have a stiffness which suggests he has not chosen his true medium.

It is certainly not as a poet that Hardy has won his distinctive place in English literature. His novels are the imperishable part of him. It is by the qualities of art and mind he displays in his six greatest novels—'Far from the Madding Crowd,' 'The Return of the Native,' 'The Mayor of Casterbridge,' 'The Woodlanders,' 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' and 'Jude the Obscure'—that before his death he had come to be recognised as a living classic. All these books deal in varying degrees with rural life. 'It was one of those sequestered spots outside the gates of the world where may usually be found more meditation than action, and more listlessness than meditation; where reasoning proceeds on narrow premisses, and results in inferences wildly imaginative; yet where, from time to time, dramas of a grandeur and unity truly Sophoclean are enacted in the real, by virtue of the concentrated passions and closely-knit interdependence of the lives therein.' This sentence from 'The Woodlanders' is true of nearly all the Wessex novels. Hardy moves uneasily in the drawing-room. His province lies in the farmhouse, the mill, the village inn, the market-place, in fields and woods and on the heath. What Dickens did for London, in preserving its old customs and characteristics, Hardy has done for the country. The rural life he pictures preceded the advent of the church-organ and the land-agitator. The old carrier's cart, the village choir with their stringed instruments, the statute or hiring fairs, the ancient dances, the shearing suppers, the long smock-frocks—all the old customs and modes of thought are preserved in his pages. But not exactly the old style of speech. Hardy, though his novels, with their rich store of old-fashioned words, afford a fine field for the philologist, makes his peasants talk a

language that is reminiscent of their own rather than identical with it. For the pure Dorset you must go to William Barnes, for so many years his friend and neighbour. And to read the Rev. William Barnes is to realise how sound was the artistic judgment of Thomas Hardy in giving us a flavouring of the dialect rather than the article itself.

Hardy is, indeed, pre-eminently an artist. 'In these days,' he wrote of Anatole France, during the great French writer's visit to England some few years ago, 'when the literature of narrative and verse seems to be losing its qualities as an art, and to be assuming a structureless conglomerate character, it is a privilege that we should have come into our midst a writer who is faithful to the principles that make for permanence, who never forgets the value of organic form and symmetry and the emphasis of understatement.' We, who mourn the loss of Thomas Hardy, should regard it as a still greater privilege that we had living in our midst, as a fellow countryman, a master of whom all these words are conspicuously true. He possesses an unfailing sense of structure, precision and beauty, with which, perhaps, his early studies of Gothic architecture are not unconnected. Scenery, characterisation, action—he makes all these so interwoven, makes their influence upon one another so natural and exact, that they create an impression not only of unity but of inevitableness. It is this artistic combination of dramatic power, love and knowledge of nature, and psychological insight, which has enabled Hardy, so far as craftsmanship is concerned, to bring the English novel to its highest pitch of perfection. Every little incident in his novels has some bearing upon the ultimate issue of the plot. In 'The Woodlanders,' for instance, Mrs. Charmond's purchase of Marty South's hair affects her final relations with Dr. Fitzpiers; in 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' the chance meeting of John Durbeyfield with an antiquarian parson, who causes that drivelling old idiot to realise that he belongs to the ancient family of the D'Urbervilles, never ceases to have its tragic influence upon Tess's life.

In addition to his constructive skill, which is displayed in his short stories not less successfully than in his novels, Hardy has the essential gift of reticence. Your ordinary novelist revels in the commonplace incidents of a criminal trial; Hardy knows that the province of the police court reporter is not the province of a novelist, and all the sordid details of the two murder trials in his books—the trial of Mr. Boldwood for shooting Sergeant Troy and the trial

of Tess for stabbing Alec D'Urberville—are left severely alone. Occasionally, it is true, this artistic reserve does "forsake him. The concluding scene at Stonehenge, where the police close in upon poor Tess while she lies exhausted amid the immemorial stones, has a melodramatic touch quite alien to the pathetic beauty of the tale, and the incredible incident in '*Jude the Obscure*,' where the children of Jude and Sue are hanged by a precocious boy not much older than themselves, is a gratuitous piece of ghastliness. But these little lapses are extremely rare. His dramatic power does not degenerate into theatrical effect; he is usually content to rely upon 'the emphasis of under-statement.'

One of the supreme qualities of the Wessex novels lies in the depth and significance they give to human life by unifying it with the eternal forces of nature. If Hardy's knowledge of nature is not so minute as Richard Jefferies', he has a keener and more sympathetic eye for it in its broader aspects. There is little of the love of the hedgerow in his books. It is of the moorland, the woods, the fields, the sky, the wind, the rain, that he writes. In the General Preface to '*Waverley*' Sir Walter Scott confesses that he was inclined to drag his hero about the Highlands in order to describe the scenery. Hardy, though no novelist has a more intimate feeling for the pageant of land and sky, never resorts to mere scenic effect. With him, master of the picturesque as he is, the hills and the woods are much more than a background; they are an organic part of the narrative, helping to mould the characters of the people who live amid them. Egdon Heath is as much an organism—vast, watchful and grim—as Eustacia Vye, Damon Wildeve, Clym Yeobright, the Reddleman and any of the other folk who live their troubled lives upon it. How well with the famous picture of the heath harmonises the vivid description of the beautiful Eustacia, who, impatient with the loneliness of her days, longs for 'the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover.' 'To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow: it closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow . . . she had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries.'

In striking contrast to the haggard heath in '*The Return of the Native*'—the very heath, perhaps, of that King of Wessex who figures in one of the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies—is the 'wondrous world of sap and leaf' in '*The Woodlanders*'. Even here Nature, though more kindly, is quite as dominant. There is

scarcely a character in the story into whose innermost being the subtle influence of the woods has not entered. The very trees acquire a touch of personality. When the young pines are planted Marty holds the slender boles whilst Giles throws in the mould.

"How they sigh directly we put 'em upright, though while they are lying down they don't sigh at all," said Marty.

"Do they?" said Giles. "I've never noticed it."

'She erected one of the young pines into its hole, and held up her finger; the soft musical breathing instantly set in, which was not to cease night or day till the grown tree should be felled—probably long after the two planters should be felled themselves.

"It seems to me," the girl continued, "as if they sigh because they are very sorry to begin life in earnest—just as we be."

"Just as we be?" He looked critically at her. "You ought not to feel like that, Marty."

'Her only reply was turning to take up the next tree; and they planted on through a great part of the day, almost without another word.'

In many a scene in '*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*'—in the 'verdant flatness' of the valley of the great dairies, where Tess again feels the joy of life, and in the bare and bleak situation of the farm at Flintcomb Ash, where, after Angel Clare has left her, she works as a humble toiler in the fields—it is shown how skilfully Nature can be made to serve as an interpreter of circumstance and character, and how masterly is Hardy's command of pictorial prose. Sometimes, it is true, he can be strangely formal and pedantic. Not infrequently he uses such words as 'juxtaposition' and 'contiguous' which suggest the jargon of the architect rather than the vocabulary of the artist. But if Hardy is not to be numbered, like Stevenson, among the 'stylists,' he is certainly a 'lord of language.' If he has less instinct for the inevitable word, less taste for the polished phrase, he creates, by his cumulative method, his command of detail and sense of beauty, an even deeper impression of artistic power. Things are rarely seen in flashes in Hardy's novels, they are seen steadily and as a whole.

'I dare not say,' wrote Tennyson in one of the earliest letters to his wife, 'how high I rate humour, which is generally most fruitful in the highest and most solemn human spirits. Dante is full of it, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and almost all the greatest have been pregnant with this glorious power.' Thomas Hardy is a high

and solemn spirit, and his books are rich in humour. Comedy is never far removed from tragedy, and Hardy's whole outlook on life has the light of the comic in it. He perceives what he himself calls the 'waggery of fate.' But his humour takes a more concrete form than a recognition of the caprice of destiny. It is expressed in the most notable collection of English peasants in the whole range of English fiction. The conventional thing to say of Hardy's rustics is that they have the comic vividness of Shakespeare's. Is it too bold a thing to say that they are even more real? Their humour is less verbal and more racy of the soil. They are more deliciously foolish, more ridiculously wise. The Wessex shepherds and shepherdesses, if they have nothing of Dresden clay about them, are never mere clods. Below the slow speech of Hardy's peasants are heard the accents of generations of farm labourers, so clearly, in thought and bearing, do they suggest the continuity of their calling. They are never in the nature of comic relief, but always an essential part of the drama of life. Perhaps the best of this rustic humour is to be found in 'Far from the Madding Crowd.'

Hardy's rustics often give a stout Biblical turn to their talk, and, like Tennyson's 'Northern Farmer,' are wont to speak rather familiarly of the Deity. 'The best of us are hardly honest sometimes,' says Christopher Carey of the good folk of Casterbridge, 'what with hard winters, and so many mouths to fill and God-a-mighty sending his little taters so *terrible small* to fill 'em with.'

Not always does the humour ring so true. 'Yes, matrimony do begin "Dearly Beloved" and end with "amazement," as the Prayer Book says.' One recognises Hardy's own hand here. It was he, and not one of his peasants, who, turning over the marriage service, perhaps in some inattentive moment in church, discovered that it does begin with the one phrase and end with the other. Liddy, the sycophantic companion of Bathsheba, drops at least one nice phrase that proclaims the author rather than the maid.

"Did anybody ever want to marry you, miss?" Liddy asked.

"A man wanted to once," Bathsheba said, in a highly experienced tone, and the image of Gabriel Oak, as the farmer, rose before her.

"How nice it must seem!" said Liddy with the fixed features of mental realization. "And you wouldn't have him?"

"He wasn't quite good enough for me."

"How sweet to be able to disdain, when most of us are glad

to say 'Thank you.' I seem to hear it, 'No, sir—I'm your better,' or 'Kiss my foot, sir; my face is for mouths of consequence.'"

As a rule, however, the humour of these Wessex folk is unforced. They are humorists without knowing it. Their spontaneous talk represents the high spirits of village life.

Hardy is something more than the writer of moving and deftly constructed stories, the chronicler of the lively simplicity of village inns; something more than the painter and interpreter of nature, the sensitive student of all elemental things. He is a creator of character. Unlike some great novelists, who seldom let you see their characters except through their own eyes, he rarely imposes his own presence upon his pages. His characters, like those of the great dramatists, move of their own volition. Take Michael Henchard, who is the most impressive of all the masculine figures in the Wessex novels—less subtle than Jude, but framed in a much larger mould. Though, in Johnson's phrase, he 'rolls darkling down the torrent of his fate,' yet his innate strength, his dynamic force, never deserts him. From the dramatic beginning of the narrative, where in a drunken freak he sells his wife to a sailor, to its finely pathetic close, where, an outcast from the town in which he has been Mayor, he dies in a miserable cottage miles away, he is like an elemental force let loose. In his soul the eternal feud of good and evil is always being fought. So intense is his hatred of Donald Farfrae, who supplants him in all he holds most dear, in his business as a corn merchant, in his reputation in Casterbridge, in the affection of Elizabeth Jane, that one thinks that there can be no injury which in his barbaric anger he is not ready to inflict upon him. Yet when he seeks to kill the man of slighter build he insists that it must be a fair fight and pinions one of his own arms to lessen the advantage of his strength. None of Hardy's books furnishes a finer example of his skill in utilising a dramatic episode to develop a psychological study. Henchard is to 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' what the heath is to 'The Return of the Native'; his sombre vehemence dominates the story. In all the other novels, except 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles,' groups of characters, usually sharply contrasted, divide the interest. Henchard is the one great figure in 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' that fills the eye; all the others are dwarfed by his masterful spirit. In 'Jude the Obscure,' in which the ancient conflict of flesh and spirit, of high ambitions and strong emotions, is feverishly waged, the interest is equally

divided between Jude Fawley, the ambitious stonemason who suffers the tragedy of unfulfilled aims, and Sue Bridehead—perhaps the most subtle, certainly the most intellectual, of all Hardy's women. Tess, like Henchard, stands out almost alone in her tragic drama. Alec D'Urberville, the masterful sensualist, and Angel Clare, the vacillating theorist, play but an incidental part in it. It is in the delineation of his feminine characters that Hardy's creative genius generally finds its best expression. He is, in other words, most successful where he is most sympathetic, and nowhere is his sympathy expressed more beautifully than in the final scene of 'The Woodlanders,' where Marty Smith, so gentle in temper, so resolute in grief, stands over Giles Winterborne's grave—a Millet-like picture sublimely vivid, spiritually tender.

' . . . As this solitary and silent girl stood there in the moonlight, a straight, slim figure, clothed in a plaitless gown, the contours of womanhood so undeveloped as to be scarcely perceptible, the marks of poverty and toil effaced by the misty hour, she touched sublimity at points and looked almost like a being who had rejected with indifference the attribute of sex for the loftier quality of abstract humanism. She stooped down and cleared away the withered flowers that Grace and herself had laid there the previous week, and put fresh ones in their place.

"Now, my own, own love," she whispered, "you are mine, and on'y mine; for she has forgot 'ee at last, although for her you died. But I—whenever I get up I'll think of 'ee, and whenever I lie down I'll think of 'ee. Whenever I plant the young larches I'll think that none can plant as you planted; and whenever I split a gad, and whenever I turn the cider wring, I'll say none could do it like you. If ever I forget your name let me forget home and heaven! . . . But no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee; for you was a good man, and did good things!"'

It is, however, upon Tess, the most pathetic and pain-enduring of all his heroines, that Hardy's sympathy is poured out most lavishly. He is her champion. A passionate note of personal feeling is in the book, and for this reason, but for this reason only, it is less artistic than the rest. 'A Pure Woman' is how he describes her on the title page of the novel, and in that description he flings a challenge to the world. Tess, who, like nearly all Hardy's women, is filled with the joy of life, is pure in intention. She never offends against her better self. When she returns to Alec D'Urberville, the most questionable of all her actions, she is

weary of life and resistance, and merely lets her body slip away from her soul. Therefore, says Hardy, she is pure. To him she is a noble illustration of the miserable truth that the woman pays—and heavy—surely too heavy—does he make the penalty, though the debt be but small. Never did the pure in heart inherit so large a kingdom of pain.

Here, indeed, lies the most distinctive note which Hardy has struck in modern fiction—the deep note of tragedy. ‘As the active world is inferior to the rational soul,’ says Bacon, ‘so Fiction gives to manhood what history denies, and, in some measure, satisfies the mind with shadows where it cannot enjoy the substance. . . . As real *history* gives us not the success of things according to the deserts of vice and virtue, *Fiction* corrects it, and presents us with the fates and fortunes of persons rewarded or punished according to merit.’ That is certainly not Hardy’s notion of the function of the novel. ‘The sense of tears in mortal things’ is less known in his books than in life itself. He is rarely in

‘that blessed mood  
In which the burden of the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world  
Is lightened.’

The dominant note is not only tragic; it is fatalistic and ironic. No sooner do Tess and Jude attempt to ‘breast the blows of circumstance’ than the hand of Destiny smites them amid the mocking laughter of the Gods. Tess, made for happiness, merely wants to live; Jude, endowed with an acquisitive mind, merely seeks to learn. No matter whether they wish to rest or rise, Fate is equally cruel in punishing them for daring to desire. ‘They are,’ in Hardy’s own words, ‘sarcastically and piteously handled in having such irons thrust into their souls.’ The fatalism of the Wessex novels, though it has something of the classical in its design, is derived from an older source than the classics. ‘Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?’ In that cry of despair from Job is the keynote of the story of Jude. His keen recognition of the ‘artistry of circumstance’ often makes Hardy more wilful and fantastic than Fate itself. ‘The President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess,’ he says at the gloomy close of his saddest book. Hardy sometimes seems governed by a harsh desire to contribute to the

Presidential sport. But if, particularly in his later novels, he is a pessimist, he is never a cynic. His characters have the inherent dignity of manhood and womanhood. They each seem to exclaim, in the proudest lines to be found in modern verse :

‘ In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.’

They struggle with their fate, and in their resistance lies the true, the majestic note of tragedy. Though happiness be but ‘ an occasional episode in a general drama of pain,’ yet the episodes do occur. Amid all the irony of fortune, the mockery of fate, beauty, fidelity, humour and compassion have their place. If all’s *not* right with the world, the sun’s in the heavens ; if human existence be but a rather dark and struggling thing, the earth renews its youth every spring and ‘ the blue sky bends over all.’ Let it be admitted that Thomas Hardy has no solutions of the problems of life. Where is the novelist who has ? Although he deals with sex relations as frankly as any writer of our time—though, in truth, the modern enfranchisement of the novel is due mainly to the artistic freedom with which he has written of the fundamental things of life—yet he never trifles with the basic principles of morals. He makes the way of the transgressor hard. The voice of conscience which, in Milton’s fine phrase, is ‘ God’s Secretary ’ may be heard in nearly all his books. If they show how inexorable are the laws of Fate, how ironical the destiny that shapes our ends, they also show, amid much else that is true and good, how large and intimate is the part which that Secretary plays in human affairs.

*AT THE SIGN OF THE NIMBLE RABBIT.*  
BY ELIZABETH WALMSLEY.

[*A causerie on modern French art, and on two remarkable studies of the international bohemianism of Paris to-day.*]

WHICH of us does not remember, in one or another of our childish tales, the lone and unexpected cabin whose solitary light gleaming from a low-browed little window out into the darkness cheers the belated wayfarer when he has all but given up hope of finding food or shelter for the night ? Only when he reaches it the place proves to be a sinister-looking little cabin indeed, and his welcome inspires him with anything but confidence. But the traveller can go no farther. He is footsore and famished. The night is cold and stormy.

Thankful for what rough viands his surly host at length consents to set before him, he presently stumbles his way to the pallet whither the man, with a gleam of murderous cupidity in his eyes, at length conducts him.

Which of us does not remember the creepy moment when the traveller awakes, dimly aware of menace ? When the moonlight streaming in at the squint-eyed lattice reveals a dark form noiselessly pushing the door ajar . . . crawling in pools of shadow across the uneven floor . . . ?

It is a priceless moment, however the tale goes on, and a priceless story.

Who would think to come across that ‘ murderer’s tavern ’ anywhere but in a story book ; to recapture the thrill of it, now, when one is grown up ? What strange adventure should lead one’s steps in such remote direction ?

There is such a thing as having a ‘ flair ’ for books and pictures : it is a flair that takes you by the nose and leads you whither you never heard of, to the inevitable discovery of more than you knew you sought. For the little house in Grimm’s fairy tale actually exists. It belongs to a world of its own as strange as the queerest tale that ever was told. But it isn’t a sinister little house to-day. Whatever may have happened there once upon a time ago, none avoid it now. Rather it would seem to be a place of tumultuous resort.

It is still a leprous-walled, grimy-ceilinged cabin enough, with a hoary old pine-tree, wide-bent, in front of it, and goodness only knows what in the dark night around. A steep hill shelves to right and left, and the way is deep in sand. There is a rough and broken fence in front shutting in a trestle table and a bench or two, hardly to be descried in the shadows save for the beacon light, red and gold, which gleams from a solitary window, or from the door when the latter chances to be suddenly shoved open.

The tiny courtyard where the benches are is crowded. Faces press against the window panes without. Folk jostle for place upon the doorstep ; the road is overflowed. There is a sound of Rabelaisian laughter within, the tinkle of a guitar, snatches of song, salvoes of hand clapping, and a riotous stamping on the floor. Then the door bursts open, the noise intensifies ; a crowd surges out against the crowd surging in. . . .

No sign can be descried hanging outside the tavern, though perhaps one is there. No one, exactly, can point out the 'Nimble Rabbit.' You have come upon it in the most unexpected manner, only having learnt of its existence by the chance that favours those with the aforementioned flair. It is a bewitched little house nevertheless, for the company within is of yesterday. The crowd that jostles in the roadway without to-night matters neither here nor there . . . although some there may be in it who can establish kith and kin with those others. . . .

The road thither is no less fantastic than the goal. It begins on the steps of Burlington House in London. It leads to Paris and runs right through the great exhibition of academic pictures in the Champs Elysées, and then takes the queerest twist—up the dark purlieus of the 'Butte,' where the old jostles the new in inextricable confusion even to the Montmartrois himself, and lands you, lost, beyond the line of the outer boulevards, beyond the stopping place of any obliging taxi, and leaves you to track the 'Rabbit' to his burrow by yourself.

Everybody knows about the 'Lapin Agile'—*once you have discovered it for yourself*. It is one of the old-time Bohemian cafés of Montmartre. There are others, but none quite of its genre. It is in the guide books (though one would never pick it out from them), and Mr. Leonard Merrick knows it. Doubtless so do Mr. Locke and Mr. Lucas.

The Lapin has nothing in common with the stupid banalities of the Montmartre boulevard. It is something entirely different,

rich even to-day with the real tradition of that peerless vagabond François Villon, whose memory flames yet like an aureole ‘au front de la bohème moderne.’

And it is M. Francis Carco who takes you there, by the hand, and shows you what the Lapin means—or meant only a few years ago. The tradition is not yet extinct. It was the flair for books, and no Paris guide, which gave you to his direction, for his best and latest work, ‘De montmartre au quartier latin’ (capitals suppressed), has recently come out. A dozen other titles own to M. Carco’s authorship; under this one you get the old, old story of literary apprenticeship. It is on all fours with what he has to tell of the other art.

But for M. Carco, you would have sat on the terrace of the Café de la Rotonde, at the corner of the Boulevards Raspail and Montparnasse and believed you were seeing what you sought in Paris.

You would have sat on the terrace of the Rotonde in the full glare of the fascinating night life of the crowded boulevards, with your head full of Ethel Mannin and her ‘Pilgrims,’ or of Outroki-kempak with his nose painted red on one side and yellow on the other and his waistcoat done up at the back (why not?). You would have sat there looking for the verminous Soutine (the painter of raw meat, who would buy a bit of scrag end from the butcher with the vision of the æstheté, make studies from it for a week or so, and then devour it), or on the watch for ‘Red Haricot.’ For your head would be even fuller of ‘Les Montparnos,’ M. Michel-Georges-Michel’s amazing contribution to the literature of the international bohemianism of present-day Paris.

Anyone can find the Café de la Rotonde, and the Dome, opposite. You get told about it, even if you aren’t concerned. Americans and the tourist ‘booj-wuz’ go there nightly, sight seeing.

But the ‘Lapin’ is quite another matter.

There was the ‘Vachette’ in Du Maurier’s day, in the Boul’ Mich’, and a dozen others, but the cabaret on the Butte was unique seventeen years ago, and is still in some sort unique perforse of a reputation made before the tide of artistic life set so strongly south of the river.

Between them, however, the Lapin and the Rotonde account for all that has been making in the history of art from the early days of the Fauves, to the Surrealisme, or the Luminism of the present moment. We pick up betwixt M. Carco’s pages, or in the sand of the so-called Rue des Saules outside the Lapin, the key to no less a riddle than the whole subject of modern art. The astonish-

ing fact (not the key) flies to one's head. It has the effect of one of those 'alcools de fantaisie' responsible for so much of the new painting.

We discover that there have been no 'schools' at all; there have only been individuals. The Lapin was where they originally foregathered. The book takes us and sets us down outside with our noses jammed up against the crack of the window, waiting our chance to get in. We catch sight of Utrillo, Picasso, Vlaminck, of Max Jacob, of Salmon, of Marie Laurencin and Le Vaissière, of the spirited founders of the 'Hotel of the Hard-Boiled Egg and of Commerce' and of Dorgelés and 'le petit Père Dedé' on one of those hilarious nights when the two laid their heads together for the winning of a bet, and the flabbergasting of the contemporary 'snob.' That was the night when they tied the paint-brush on to the donkey's tail, and 'à force' merely 'de vider les tubes' produced thereby 'un barbouillage sans nom' which Dorgelés called 'A Sunset on the Adriatic' and actually exhibited at the famous Salon des Refusés with 'un succès fou.'

A glorious company, indeed, they were—with never a sou to bless themselves with among the lot.

M. Carco himself, later a boon companion, discovered the Lapin by quite a chance.

The rights of translation of his book are reserved. If they weren't, there might be some question, on reaching the end of it, whether or no it would be permitted an English dress. It is, however, an undoubtedly, if a desperately improper, work of art.

In the series of little books on modern French painters being produced by a sort of mutual admiration society in Paris at present, we get a page or two of exposition, a few illuminating contemporary criticisms, and a series of reproductions of the works of this, that, or the other revolutionary genius. We might study the lot, and all the journalism of the Salons, and even the ponderous volumes of metaphysic pouring from the high-brow press on the subject of modernist art and its manifold 'movements' with less profit than a single page of Francis Carco.

The first part of the book is a riot of irresponsible fun and a glorious boiling up and boiling over of gifted and original Gallic spirits. In the middle we get pages of an ennui and disillusion as profound as any Tolstoy ever penned. Later there is a picture of Paris on the night when the war broke out—and the epic tragedy of a second Lantier.

In the sixties and seventies of the last century, in France, the

furious battle that was joined in matters of high art as between a dying romanticism and a nascent realism had its upshot in the opening of a Salon where the pictures refused by the jury of the Beaux Arts might be referred to the judgment of artists the wide world over, and of the public (if indeed, the latter ever mattered). The 'Salon des Refusés' (echoed at the time in English art matters by the Grosvenor Gallery) was due to a happy thought of no less an individual than the Emperor himself. He felt, acutely, that something should be done to allay the passionate sense of injustice under which the 'new men' of the day were labouring. Then in 1886 appeared Zola's powerful and heart-rending story of the crisis, known in English as 'The Masterpiece.' The character of Claude Lantier, as is well remembered, was founded upon that of Manet, a personal friend of the novelist's, and on his study of Cézanne.

Since that date much water has flowed beneath the arches of the venerable Pont Neuf. Forty years have sped. And a strange cycle is achieved! In these latter days, long since the epoch-making event of the war, another writer pens the story of Claude Lantier all over again. It is a still more heart-breaking story—lit only by the glory of one of those faiths and friendships supremely inspired by art—and it epitomises the end of the amazing adventure as 'L'Œuvre' epitomised its beginning.

With Manet and the startling school of 'plein air' there was a great renaissance in art. The new liberty achieved then has had forty years in which to work out its ends. The story is sufficiently well known. First came recognition, then acclaim—and afterwards the deluge; the pace, of course, always being set by France. Whether or no with the cerebral 'surréalism' of to-day we reach the last of the bewildering and meteoric succession of experiments in painting which took rise more properly with the 'faunes' at the turn of the century than with the liberators of the sixties, may be still a question. But with the tragedy of Modigliani modernism ends where it began. Lantier repeats himself.

The pages in which Zola contrasts the academic Salon with his famous Refusés might equally well apply to-day in contrasting the pictures at the Champs Elysées with those of the new men at the Salon de Bois near the Porte Maillot. It is a little difficult to say whether the Beaux Arts is behind or ahead of our Academy in its attitude towards the ultra-modern. There is only M. Pougheon's extraordinary distortion. But with the 'right centre' at the Salon de Bois distortion is the rule. Here the canvas before

which the enthusiasts grow cool is the one which panders to the intelligible ; the painter who loses ground is the one who begins to humanise himself, or to look upon the human form or face as anything but a mere excuse for painting. Here the painter ceases to demand any 'response' from his public at all. He is almost entirely subjective. Only a sort of artistic telepathy can establish relations between an ultra modern and his beholder. Nothing else 'puts his message across.'

Nevertheless it is here, in the Salon de Bois, that the current of contemporary art (if there is such a thing, which some would deny) runs strongest. Here is force and strength and originality. Here is innovation, still further experiment, and ever more and more audacity. No one, here, cares what anyone thinks of anything—so long as he gets hung. Here is every sort of challenge that youth still flings in the face not of age but of those only by the merest shade older than themselves. Here are the present-day 'chickens capable of arriving quickly at the pot.'

They are the heirs, not of the generation, but of the original group at the Lapin. And the group itself—although now mainly of Montparnasse—is still well represented. Utrillo is here, and Vlaminck, and Suzanne Valadon, and Matisse himself. There have been four or more groups since then—in the latest of which occur such names as Kisling, Gromaire, Prax, and Goerg. Modigliani eminently belonged.

'C'était, le long des murs,' as Zola wrote of the *beginnings* in 1886, 'un mélange de l'excellent et du pire, tous les genres confondus, les gâteaux de l'école historiques' (the extreme 'left' of the Salon de Bois) 'couduoyant les jeunes fous de réalism, les simples niais restés dans la tas avec les fanfarons de l'originalité. . . . Rien ne manquait dans l'exécrable . . . mais de cet ensemble incohérent . . . presque tous d'un note sincère et juste . . . il sortait une bonne odeur de jeunesse, de bravoure, et de passion.' The 'odeur' at the Bois is not entirely 'bonne' to-day. There is—admittedly—too much 'orphéism' in the modern manhandling of 'le nu'; too much riot in the utter overthrow of the ideal. But for all that, here we have the upshot of those beginnings when Lantier, the young leader of his crowd, went shouting down the boulevards with a gesture to pocket all Paris.

That the whole thing is utterly incomprehensible to the ordinary beholder matters not a jot. It is equally so to many whose knowledge or practice (or both) of the art of painting sets them in a

different category. The criticism which extols it writes them all down for 'snobs.' The Frenchman thinks a snob is a connoisseur—who can't see eye to eye with him about (for instance) these modernist pictures. Or perhaps he won't allow the 'connoisseur' at all, merely the 'groundling.'

That we people here in England can have little idea, without going to Paris, of the pace set by art over there only matters when we find ourselves in the upper room at the Chenil Gallery, treated to a homœopathic dose of it; or when with the exhibition of the London Group we get an echo, strident on some notes, of the tune it is calling.

At the Salon de Bois, and all over the Latin quarter, we get it in 'horrific bulk.' London has seen Matisse and Picasso and Vlaminck and Braque: there was a Marie Laurencin at the Tate some time ago. But what about Gromaire, and Goerg and René Blum, and sculptors like Giacometti? Doubtless they will all come. Three or four miles of such work on end make one wonder what prevents the heavens falling. The wonder is extremely 'snobbish.'

There is no explanation of this art, this trend, this strange adventuring, unless in literature. Aesthetics cannot furnish it. The human equation is responsible, and the post-war times. For the key we looked to the writer, the man who loves the art because he loves the painters. Zola made it impossible for us ever again, or ever after, to laugh with *derision* (only for heaven's sake let us laugh with gaiety!) at what we fail to understand, or even utterly to execrate it. There may be something fine—beyond us. Zola made us responsible for a more terrible thing than Lantier's suicide—for the breaking of his artist's heart.

Face to face with these canvases at the Salon de Bois we have another writer to bid us beware of our attitude. Francis Carco shows us the men.

He shows us Utrillo, that strange painter of mysterious streets and shuttered houses, of scenes of which the likelihood is that each one of us, looking on them, will come suddenly upon some hidden watcher—none other than our own enigmatic double. The fear suspires from the canvas by enchantment. What an interpretation! It is M. Carco's own. A volume on Utrillo could not tell us more.

Of Picasso we get an exhilarating glimpse. It was he who, displaying an angular sort of lozenge to another enterprising spirit, Max Jacob, let fall the remark that it looked exactly like his mistress

in a bad temper. Max was vastly tickled. He picked up the lozenge and 'complicated things' by way of bringing out the resemblance—thus provoking the discovery of the famous cube! Only another day a still more ridiculous affair befel 'gros de conséquences pour le cubism.'

'Max's brother . . . happened to turn up (from Africa), bringing with him his portrait painted by a nigger at Dakar.' The resemblance instantly struck the artists, though they could not fail to remark that the gilded buttons of Max's brother's tunic, instead of belonging to their proper place, were disposed in an aureole around his head. Surprising departure! The principle was discovered of the dissociation of objects, and so inspired Picasso in his first researches that shortly afterwards he pronounced 'When you paint a portrait, put the legs alongside.'

How could they help laughing at the formulas of this new école when Picasso, again, having made a study by the Seine of an array there of packing cases of all shapes and sizes discharged upon the quay, called it 'portrait of my father'? There were a dozen such portraits of unfortunate parents in the next exhibition of the independents.

The whole of the Rue Ravignon was vowed to cubism at that time. Picasso, Max Jacob, and Salmon all hung out in the neighbourhood, and so did another exceptional spirit called La Vaissière, who lived in a state of Adam, summertime, seated on the mantelpiece for the sake of the coolth. Only La Vaissière seldom remained for more than a few days in one lodging. He was given to midnight fits. Should his friend, the writer, fail on any occasion to keep an appointment, La Vaissière merely smashed the glass of any handy fire alarm, gave Carco's address at the Station, and left it to the consequences to remind him.

We arrive in these pages at an understanding of the way in which the tide of life artistic may flow from one quarter to another. An exodus from Montmartre and its cafés of resort began before 1913, and was due to inner strains in the original group. Another remained behind. With Dorgelés this second 'équipage' was 'au grand complet'—or, in English, the whole gay crew found itself intact. But men like Derain, Salmon, Apollinaire, Picasso, and Modigliani reappeared but seldom at the Rabbit. Finally Francis Carco himself, 'suddenly deciding to work,' abandoned the Butte for the Quartier Latin, and began a career of letters strictly in accordance with every tradition of struggle and rebuff. The pages

that record it are some of the most intimately human and poignantly biographical that could possibly be written.

M. Carco shows us extraordinary things—among others an appalling old procuress turning literary adviser to a firm of publishers with immense perspicacity. He shows us himself, ‘ivre mort’ (after a hectic discussion of aesthetics), with a *billet-doux* screwed up and posted tightly in one ear, in which his *p'tite amie* explains—against his coming to his senses—what she has done, for safety, with his available cash.

He shows us Modigliani, that fantastic figure, who might well have ‘arrived’ had he survived the fever of his own strange fantasy.

It would be almost safe to deny outright that anyone, especially an Anglo-Saxon, could appreciate even the less extreme forms of modern continental art (i.e. Parisian art, the ‘*école de Paris*’) without some such initiation from inside as M. Carco affords us. Steeped as he was (and is) himself in the very atmosphere of the most amazing and unaccountable pioneers of a new expressionism, familiar as he had been for years with its achievement and ideas, with the ultra-febrilism of its latest phases, he confesses that at first Modigliani was beyond him.

Modigliani had to be acquired, like the most exotic of new tastes, even by this expert.

Yet some there were—two there were—endowed with the vision that saw him from the outset. One was the rough proprietress of a mean eating-house who, on the strength of some astonishing sketch of his flung upon the wall with a turn or two of the wrist, left the penniless vagabond in peace to eat and drink there gratis. The other was the friend who from first to last counted no personal effort or sacrifice on behalf of the painter for the sake of an unassailable faith in a genius it remains yet to establish. M. Zborowski introduced Modi to Carco, and the man of letters presently caught the strong infection. His paragraphs, describing what it meant to him to go home and *live* with a few of the Modigliani canvases (at sight of which the concierge nearly fell down dead), reveal to us outsiders how this taste, this vision, must constitute a world, remote to most as one of the outer planets, but very heaven to the few who reach it and can breathe there.

The whole story would seem to be the only form of art criticism which the Modigliani vogue (and many another like it) requires.

Years yet went by before anybody else could be induced to tolerate this art. Zborowski never faltered in his faith. Carco

presently got up a vast enthusiasm. 'The example that I possessed in my little room filled me with delight,' he tells us, 'although none of my friends could see anything in it. They all considered me cracked. I let them have their say and their laugh, and set myself to save up for all I was worth to buy more Modis of the connoisseur who continued to boost them to the uttermost of his sincerity and power.' 'What intoxication it was,' writes Carco, 'to wake of a morning on the Quai aux Fleurs among these nudes of Modigliani . . . I kept the pictures in my room as a lover keeps his mistress, avid of her presence. They absolutely lived . . . they were to real love what music is to poetry. . . . Every morning this exquisite pleasure awaited me, and whenever I achieved a fresh purchase I would wake up a dozen times during the night to light my lamp and fall into an absorbed contemplation of the painting which I have no words to express.'

He might be talking of Cimabue's Florentine Madonna, of one of Raphael's Virgins, or of the masterpiece of the consummate 'pupil of Mabeuse' in Balzac. But as a matter of fact he is talking of an art so widely alien to all that it stands alone even in the école de Paris to-day, even among the moderns.

It is difficult to describe Modigliani's art. He was one of those to introduce the negroid element into design. His drawing was characterised by an English artist as 'exhilarated babble,' in which, however, is to be discerned a wealth of form 'under severe control.' He himself, as to colour, asked only for black and white and ochre, although reds and the hues of sunlight dominated his vision. He has only once been seen in England. There was an exhibition of his drawings held at the gallery of Messrs. Arthur Tooth in November 1926, when the highbrow press fell, as usual, into ecstasy. English collectors, however, scarcely rose to the significance of Modi.

This man, as a figure in art, is to be studied even more in 'Les Montparnos' than in M. Carco's volume. A parallel has been suggested between him and Zola's martyr to the 'snobism' (conservatism) of the sixties. Claude Lantier succumbed, but the thing for which he stood, in painting, came gloriously into its own. Modigliani succumbed; but he was—or bade fair to be—an outstanding figure in that strange new art of our time which owes so much to a cubism now, in its turn, overpast. In 'Les Montparnos' we get that thrilling moment when Modi bursts the bonds of Picasso's formula, and escapes to some empyrean of his own. Raphael, said Picasso, was Carpaccio escaped.

Modi's idea was that modern art ('Lapinism' is an inspired name for it !) awaits a second Raphael. All these modern searchings and experimentings are nothing, really, but the building of the plinth of a great column, upon the summit of which a latter-day Raphael, a sort of Art-Messiah to come, is to kindle a new flame. While his own immediate friends half trusted that Modi's own would be the hand to light it, the painter himself dreamed—of a son, whether mothered by a daughter of the people, or by a dazzling woman of society.

M. Carco, however, scarcely soars so far as M. Michel into the region of romance. Modigliani's was a name, he tells us, which only awaits the seal of death to go down to posterity. The painter died, in fact, in 1920. He was still wretchedly poor and unacclaimed, and was in rapid consumption. Zborowski sent him away to Nice. No one yet cared a jot about his pictures or would waste a sou upon them. Nevertheless he continued to paint. 'One could have sworn that stupidity and vanity were in league against this man who never lost faith in his art.' Finally, Modigliani came back to Paris, poorer and worse than ever, bringing with him the mother of his little girl, and the child into the bargain. All three of them hung hopelessly round Zborowski's neck.

November and December dragged themselves away. Modigliani, coughing 'à rendre l'âme' and spitting blood, toiled in a fireless attic, confiding his pictures to his friend to sell. One day, just after the turn of the year, Zborowski found him on his wretched sofa dying. They sent for the ambulance to take him to the hospital. A few hours later this sad spirit of the Paris streets, this devotee of an incomprehensible art, breathed his pitiable last. 'Modigliani mort, nous eûmes immédiatement la certitude que son règne commençait.'

Maybe! And maybe not. . . .

When in Zola's story they cut down the body of the artist suicide, but few of his erstwhile friends followed him to one of the most wretched burplings in literature. Claude Lantier, the master, who had yet failed to achieve his formula and 'plant' his *chef d'œuvre* at the head of the new school, passed out utterly unnoticed. Christine, his wife, lay unconscious in hospital. What became of her—who knows? The only likelihood for her was dish-washing, perhaps, in some low-class eating-house.

Modigliani's poor mistress could scarcely be detached from the dead man's breast. When they took him away, she flung herself

and her unborn child from a window. The story in 'Les Montparnos' is unspeakably awful.

He had an ovation at the graveside when it was too late. Was this the inauguration of his reign? With Lantier forgotten, his 'plein air' crept at last even into the Salon. Sunshine danced upon its unaccustomed walls. But what about Modigliani?

Only time can tell.

With the febrilists and the abstractionists and the surréalists of to-day art would seem to have reached the limit of that new lease inaugurated so long ago by the great original of Zola's grand impressionist. One cannot conceive what next it may present.

The most advanced of French criticism would begin to ask to-day whether or no the tide is on the turn. 'Are we not at a turning point in the history of so-called modern art?' writes M. Eugène Parturier in 'Partisans.' 'Is a fresh wind beginning to blow? . . . Not that there can be any question, of course, of returning to official art whose cause, debated now for nearly fifty years, is definitely lost and settled. But faith in the rise of a new art, issue of the present day, embodying the aspirations of our time, has been compromised for many . . . by the spirit of adventure; by the love of the eccentric; by a passion for paradox and challenge; by a contempt for reason and intelligence as compared with a merely instinctive sensibility; by an obsession with a primitivism which would exalt the puerilities of a negro or savage art; by an imagination pushed to the excess of "surréalism"; by the glacial frigidity of cubist purism issuing in a sort of geometrical quintessence'; in lieu—all this—of *pictures*, and of masterly painting. The Lapin did it; and the Rotonde goes on with it.

But with the death of Modigliani the cycle is complete. Modi's strange art was the end-reaction of the great experiment of fifty years ago. Lantier died in poverty and despair, but he bequeathed the solar spectrum to the artist's palette. We have seen what art has made, since, of this inheritance. And when it is squandered and spent—Modigliani dies in even greater squalor.

There is no need for the recondite metaphysics or for the original aesthetic by which it is sought to interpret the types of art gestated at the Lapin. We have need of nothing more than such pages of regret and reminiscence as have been written by this One who Belonged, who shared the miseries and the aspirations of the heady band, who, with a muckrake in his hand, rejoiced over every glitter in the gutter and found, or believed he jound, a jewel.

## THE NAT OF NOGMUNG.

BY WANDA.

THE file of coolies halted, and squatting down, slipped off their headbands and set the loads in a row against a bank, preparatory to producing their pipes. Firmstone, mopping his brow, cursed at the delay. Then, to himself : ' Well, we'll never get anywhere at this rate. Why, these damned coolies halt every ten minutes, the broken-down slaves ! Blast the flies ! ' He waved his arms, and taking off his topee, fanned himself with it.

' What a hell of a country ! ' he muttered. ' It's the worst hot weather I've ever known, anyway ! Where's that lazy devil Datta ? '

He looked at the mob of coolies, who dropped their eyes, and raising his voice called : ' Laphai Noun ! '

The Chingpaw who was acting as guide had just appeared on the scene ; he carried no load except his master's gun, an embroidered bag containing personal effects, a blanket, and a broad-bladed knife in an open bamboo sheath ; these last constituted his luggage for the march.

' Why don't you get the coolies along faster, Laphai ! They're always stopping, and you're always in the rear, damn you. Tell them to hustle.' Firmstone spoke angrily, because he was hot and worried. His companion was a sick man, Datta the cook couldn't be found, and altogether things were in a bad way.

' We must halt here for the night, *Duwa* ' (chief). The guide spoke hesitatingly.

' Halt here ! Why, it isn't three o'clock yet. Don't be a fool.'

The Chingpaw seemed to scan the country all round before answering, and a shadow clouded his face. ' There is no water farther on, *Duwa*, ' he said.

' You always say that when you're feeling lazy, Laphai. Of course we can find water. There's a hut two miles on, at Nogmung. There was water there when that hut was built, and there is now.'

At this moment a second white man joined the party, walking slowly. He looked haggard, and his sunproof jacket bagged on his gaunt frame.

' How are you feeling, Bruce ? '

' Better, thanks.' He slid down against the bank, propped himself up awkwardly, and looked about him with tired, red eyes.

Everything wobbled, as seen through the quivering air, and Bruce's head ached dismally. Most of the coolies had dozed off. A vast oppressive silence reigned beneath that brazen sky, relieved only by the shrill buzz of blood-crazy insects.

'What's doing, Firmstone?' Bruce spoke weakly.

'This cross-eyed brute wants to halt here; says there's no water ahead.'

'I wouldn't mind,' said Bruce, waving a bunch of feather grass to keep off the blister flies, which were assembling in clouds. The coolies smoked and dozed. Overhead an eagle floated in lazy spirals; and Firmstone, with puckered brow, let his eye roam over the harsh landscape, while he thought deeply. Far away to the right a dim line marked the silted coast, where the tepid gulf tide sloshed amongst the mangrove swamps. To south and west the uneven yellow and green plain stretched away in imperceptible undulations to the hills; only northwards through the clouded heat did these hills swell up, range beyond range, into lofty mountains whose topmost peaks, glazed with icing, shone dully like pewter against the fading blue of the sky's edge. Firmstone's gaze turned now to the south, and rested there.

'Look!' He pointed in the direction indicated, and Bruce saw over the fringe of hungry ragged trees, bellying puffs of cloud which stood up in convoluted columns, as though shot high into the air by a sudden explosion; but their outlines were firm and argent.

'Thank God!' said Bruce, fervently. 'Oh! thank God! the monsoon will break in a week from now.' He rolled over on his face, thinking he was going to cry; for the fever had worn him threadbare.

'It may break in a day from now,' said Firmstone, grimly. 'You'll feel better then, Bruce,' he added kindly, thinking of his friend's white face. 'But we must push on, old man; I don't want to be caught here. Can you do two miles, do you think?' He broke off. 'Where is that devil Datta?'

'I'll try. Oh yes! I can do two miles, of course. Where are you going to camp, Firmstone?'

'There's a hut ahead by a *nalla* (ravine), according to the Survey chap's report. They built it in the old days, at their farthest north. I suppose it's still there, and we can easily make it before dark.'

'*Duwa*, we must stay here. The rains will break to-night'—and the guide nodded in the direction of the advancing clouds, which already showed a little higher above the tree-tops.

'Laphai Noun, we will march now.' Firmstone spoke coolly

and with complete assurance ; both Bruce and the Chingpaw felt the cutting edge in his voice. But the devil moved the latter to try one final argument.

'Duwa, the coolies refuse to sleep at the *mingyi duwa's* hut. No one ever goes there, because a *nat* (spirit) has come to live there.'

Firmstone shot out a hand and gripped him by the shoulder.

'You rotten hill monkey,' he growled, 'I've a good mind to hammer you. We are going to sleep at the hut where the Survey *Duwa* lived in the year of the expedition. Tell the coolies to start now. Don't talk.'

The Chingpaw gave the order, and one by one the obedient coolies adjusted the headbands of their loads, rose slowly to their feet, and moved on across the scorching plain. Firmstone's sunburnt face expanded into a smile, and his blue eyes twinkled as he turned to follow the guide, who grinned amiably in reply. They understood each other, these two, oh ! entirely.

The sun was now sliding down a long slant towards a far corner of the plain, but the earth had been soaking up the heat for many hours, and was paying it out again in small change ; the thorn bushes which dotted the plain looked grey and blistered, and a clump of thin palm-trees drooped their huge leaves wearily.

At last Bruce heaved himself up, and staggered after the party, thinking hard, but not very clearly. Old Firmstone was a bit gruff with the servants ! Splendid chap, Firmstone, do anything for him, of course, but he ought not to scare the natives so. Silly of them to get annoyed, though ; old Laphai now, good chap Laphai, really. And Datta, he of the pock-marked face ; no, Datta wasn't a good chap really, he had run away ; but then he couldn't cook for nuts. Yes, and why did Datta carry a carving-knife under his shirt ? He had almost forgotten that incident—he must tell Firmstone about it. But where was Datta anyhow ? After all he need not desert just because he had been threatened : he deserved it. Besides Firmstone was one of the best, even Datta knew that. But Datta wasn't here—or was he ? Bruce didn't quite know.

A quarter of a mile farther on he came up with Firmstone, who was waiting for him. He began to talk at once, rapidly, while something inside his head went round and round and round.

'I say, Firmstone, better go slow with that cunning old devil Datta. He carries a skewer under his shirt, and we don't want to get impaled, on top of our other troubles you know. Now there's Laphai—he's jibbering after your recent attentions . . .'

The fair-haired Firmstone stared at the speaker with dilated eyes ; an angry retort was on the tip of his tongue, but he swallowed it with an effort and controlled himself. After all Bruce was ill ; he probably did not know what he was saying. All he replied therefore was : ' Bruce, I know the Chingpaw tribe, have known 'em for twenty years, and their pestilent jungles too. You see those mountains ahead ? Well, that's where I'm going, into those mountains, and over them. I want to see what's on the other side, and no damned Chingpaw is going to stop me.'

' I only want to warn you that Datta looked high explosive at you when you beat him yesterday. Now he is missing. He'll do you in as sure as eggs, that man, if he gets half a chance.'

' Don't you worry, Bruce. I've got my eye on Datta. He's a fool and a knave, but he isn't tired of life yet, not by a long chalk, and he won't try tricks with me. Besides, I give 'em both salt, and an occasional pill of opium ; Datta would sell his soul for opium.'

They tramped along in silence for some time. Occasionally there was shade from a clump of twisted acacias, or an outspread fig-tree whose branches were wrapped in a veil of thin roots which strove to reach the ground. Sometimes they pushed their way through thorn scrub which tore at their clothes ; and always the hot gravel burnt their feet and flung scorched air in their faces.

' There's the hut ! ' said Firmstone suddenly, with a sigh of relief ; and Bruce saw, a quarter of a mile from the track, on the bank of a shallow water-course, one of those big solid-looking huts which the Chingpaw build. Hereabouts the scrub jungle was harsh and thick, especially along the banks of the *nalla*. The coolies had halted in a body, and were squatting down to smoke. Laphai Noungh stood apart, muttering to himself, and Datta had just appeared from nowhere, a sinister scowl on his black, shiny face. Nobody was doing anything to help, and they just stood there and looked at Firmstone, who strode forward and spoke bitter words.

' Get on with it, you bottle-nosed apes ; we're sleeping here to-night,' and Firmstone pointed towards the bungalow, whose high thatched roof rose above a thorn thicket.

' *Duwa*, we cannot sleep there, the *nats* will be angry.' Laphai spoke sulkily.

' Who the hell asked you to sleep there ? Are you mad, Laphai Noungh ? Sleep where you like, but get the kit carried up to the hut at once. Datta, you black image, get a move on, or I'll hammer

you. Bruce *sahib* is ill ; make up his bed at once, and get tea ready.'

The Indian turned his olive eyes on the impatient Englishman, and an ugly look came into his face ; but he went about his work nevertheless. After all he had been away all the morning. . . . Firmstone *sahib* had a right to be angry ; there might be a reckoning for his absence, and awkward explanations. . . .

Meanwhile Firmstone, who knew when to stop, had become reasonable once more. He knew that if the *nats*—those elfin spirits which inhabit the lakes and streams, and queer-shaped rocks and big mysterious trees of the jungle, had taken up their abode in the lonely hut, the coolies would do anything rather than disturb them. So long as one does not interfere with the *nats*, one can bribe them to let one alone, if not propitiate them to an occasional kindly action ; but woe betide the poor savage who offends them. It were better to run one's head into a hornets' nest. It was evident then that a famous *nat* had gone into residence here, and had manifested itself to the simple savages, who shunned the place like the plague ; not for worlds would they sleep there at night. Yet for Firmstone and Bruce, and even Datta, who owed no allegiance to any *nat*, it was safe enough. Firmstone therefore turned to the guide. ' You can camp here, Laphai ; get the loads taken up to the hut, and tell off some men to collect firewood. By Jove ! ' he broke off suddenly, ' look at that ! Here, get a move on, Datta, you damned corpse.'

The others turned their gaze southwards, and saw with astonishment that the monsoon, which this year had lagged behind till the earth splintered under the impact of a tropical sun, was upon them. The cloud columns were advancing at such a rate that the first storm might burst at any minute now. The sky had dimmed all over, as though some giant had breathed heavily on the blue porcelain dome ; black streamers, red-edged, fluttered out from the deploying clouds, licking their way across the sky, and the sun was rushing down fast into a bed of molten lava.

' My hat ! ' said Bruce, awed at the ominous colours and fascinated at the sight of the mountains, now stark against the glowing sky. He walked off in the direction of the bungalow, and Firmstone became very active.

' Datta, take the cooking-box—not that one, you infernal ass. Get on, Laphai, pitch your camp here, and be quick about it.' All was hurry and bustle, and Firmstone's words, and the coming storm, galvanised even the coolies to carry the loads over to the hut ; so

long as they did not have to sleep within hail, they did not mind. But the guide was ill at ease.

'*Duwa*,' he said presently, 'you don't know what you are doing. It is better not to sleep at the Survey *Duwa*'s bungalow to-night.'

Firmstone, seeing that things were going more smoothly again, was prepared to listen to the Chingpaw; besides, he took an interest in native superstitions. So he discussed the matter.

'Why not, Laphai? Your *nats* won't worry us—we aren't fair game. If we disturb your super-*nat* he'll rag *you*, not us. He'll say, "Why the sacred bo-tree did you bring these white strangers into our land?" But he won't deal with us direct.'

'Nevertheless, *Duwa*, the big *nat* will come to you in the night. Do you know that when the Survey *Duwa* was here, many moons ago, in this very bungalow Marip Noungh died? He was the *Duwa*'s guide.'

'I heard something about it. Men do die, Laphai.'

'Not like that, *Duwa*.'

'I don't remember anything particular.' Firmstone spoke easily; nevertheless he was troubled. He had heard something, and the Chingpaw knew all about it perhaps. Queer, that. 'What was it, Laphai?'

'No one knows how he died, *Duwa*; it was not a quiet death. Do not sleep there this night if you would cross the mountains yonder.'

He spoke so solemnly that in spite of himself Firmstone was moved and decided to keep a watch through the night; but he said nothing.

Also Laphai asked 'Where is Datta sleeping to-night, *Duwa*?'

'At the bungalow, of course! Why do you ask? There is a cook-house behind.'

'Let him sleep here, *Duwa*, with us!'

'Rubbish! He won't like you if you make him find his way through this scrub in the dark, especially during a storm. Of course he'll sleep in the cook-house; don't be a fool, Laphai.'

'He is dangerous, *Duwa*.'

'Shut up, Laphai, and get on with the job; I'm sick of your croaking.'

Firmstone was getting annoyed again, and the Chingpaw, without a change of expression, withdrew. While they had been talking the rest of the men had been getting things into shape for the night, and Firmstone went over to the bungalow. A fire had been lit,

buckets of water drawn from the *nalla*, in which a trickle still flowed, and the loads unpacked.

The bungalow stood on the bank of the *nalla* (where there was a fishing-pool during the rains) in a small clearing ; but the overwhelming jungle had sprung up again during the last few years, and one of the coolies was even now engaged in cutting a path through the rank growth. Immediately behind rose a huge clump of elephant bamboo, whose stems creaked eerily in the rising wind.

The two Englishmen installed themselves in the bungalow, and Datta was ordered to prepare food at once ; the coolies had gone solemnly away to their own camp, and Firmstone proceeded to look round the place.

It was getting dark now, and the lofty hut, raised four feet off the ground, and built of solid beams heavily thatched, but suffering from the inevitable insatiable decay which overtakes all timber in the tropics, looked dismal enough. Dust, derived from the tireless drilling of beetles and sawflies, which gnaw the fibre out of the hardest timber, lay in little heaps on the floor. Fungus and mould spread in loathsome patches over the wooden walls, and twined clammy fingers round the beams. Huge cobwebs flapped in the corners, and startled lizards scurried across the floor, which in places was quite rotten.

To his surprise, however, Firmstone noticed that the thatch, as far as he could see in the gloaming, was in pretty good repair, as if it had recently been renewed ; though to judge by the big spiders which occasionally dropped heavily from above, and the scurrying of tiny feet, it had been there long enough to become fully inhabited. A huge dim beam, high up, ran the length of the roof ; it seemed unnecessarily thick and strong. There were two rooms, divided by a wooden partition, a large living-room and a smaller bedroom with an annexe where an empty water chatty stood, inviting a bath ; just across what had once been the compound, but was now overgrown with rank weeds, were the remains of the cook-house. From within came the crackle of a fire, where Datta was preparing tea.

' Damn the coolies ! ' said Firmstone, angrily ; ' they might have cleaned the place up a bit before they fled.' He seized a bundle of reeds someone had brought in, and began sweeping the floor, raising clouds of dust.

' What is this *nat* they talk about ? ' asked Bruce, getting out the camp chairs and folding table ; these he set up, and turned his

attention to the bedding, which he spread out on the floor in the next room.

'Don't know. There are always *nats* in this country, everywhere. Greatest idea ever invented to account for disease and death and immunity and all the rest of it. Anticipated Pasteur by centuries, and is at least as plausible as the bug theory. You don't see the *nats*, of course, but you feel their effects.'

'You think there really is a *nat* in residence here, then ?'

'Undoubtedly, since Laphai says so ; a nest of 'em probably. However, they won't bite us if we don't disturb 'em.'

Firmstone lit the lamp, as darkness dropped like a curtain across the sky in the wake of the setting sun ; but the reddened west cooled slowly like molten ore. No stars showed, and an expectant hush hung over the jungle, even the hum of insects being subdued, though the rain still held back, save for an occasional drop which hissed on the hot sand.

Datta brought tea and food, and afterwards the two men sat silent for a while on the veranda, smoking and peering into the hot darkness beyond, and fanning themselves ; from a little distance came the faint chant of men singing in a minor key the sad mysterious jungle song of the hills, before settling round the fire for the night.

Suddenly Firmstone remembered Laphai's warning, and he fell to reviving old memories. Rodney of the Survey had stayed here—how many years ago ? And wasn't there some rather unpleasant story connected with the event ? But Rodney was dead—he had been mauled by a tiger on the Moulmein side, and his boy Maungkale had gone to another *sahib* ; and no other white man had ever been here. Rodney had built the hut, and here it was—that was something to be thankful for anyhow ; and now they stood on the threshold of the unknown, and in a few days would be astride the great snowy range which barred access to the promised land. . . . He turned his head, and as he did so a shadow behind him moved, and Firmstone sat up quivering, his nerves on edge, as a flash of distant lightning lit the veranda ; it revealed Datta, silent and motionless, standing in the doorway, barefooted, respectful, awaiting his master's pleasure. But Firmstone had been frightened, and was angry, thereby revealing the fact ; he cursed Datta, then gave orders for an early start, and turned away. But the man did not move.

Firmstone recovered himself ; he spoke sharply, but not unkindly.

'What do you want now ?'

'*Sahib*, where is Laphai Noung sleeping to-night ?'

'With the coolies, of course ! You don't suppose he'd sleep here, do you ? All the Chingpaws say a *nat* haunts this place !'

'*Sahib*, there is no *nat*, but Laphai Noung is dangerous !' Datta salaamed, and was gone, and for a full minute Firmstone and Bruce looked at each other.

At last : 'You see how difficult it all is, Bruce. The native will never say anything outright. He just gives you a hint, and leaves it there. What do you make of this ? Laphai warns me against Datta—begs me not to sleep here. Datta warns me against Laphai—wants him to sleep where he can keep an eye on him. What, if anything, is either going to do ?'

'Well, if they join forces, it will be awkward for us.' Bruce spoke calmly, but he looked serious.

'They won't. No Chingpaw would go in with an Indian ; and neither of them is up against us. Can't you see that ? It's more subtle ; we're safe enough, but are they out for each other's blood ?'

'How do you read the trouble then ? Obviously there is trouble—has been for days.'

'I don't know ; can't see daylight yet, but I will to-morrow. Look here, you'd better turn in, Bruce. I'll sit up for a bit and read ; I'm not sleepy.'

'No, you turn in. I'm better now, and I'll watch till midnight ; I don't think there's anything wrong really, just native superstition, I suppose ; but the coolies might be up to mischief.'

They argued the point a bit, till finally Bruce agreed to go to bed. As Firmstone remarked, the fever had left him weak, and what he chiefly needed was rest. If anything went wrong, it would take place before midnight ; no native would be abroad in the clammy dark hours of the dawning, and Firmstone could easily keep watch till then. When he woke up Bruce could carry on for an hour if he liked ; but nothing was likely to happen, and Firmstone didn't want him to break down altogether.

Nevertheless it was Firmstone who cracked first. Bruce sat up suddenly, the sound of a cry still ringing in his ears. It seemed to him as though he had only been asleep five minutes, but the vivid sleep of fever had actually lasted nearly an hour. He was not very clear about anything, but he slipped out of bed and dashed into the next room : something had happened—that he felt instinctively.

The clockwork lamp still ticked steadily on the table in the

centre of the room, as he had left it an hour ago, but it burned low, giving hardly any light ; the room was almost in darkness. There came a shrill laugh from the veranda, which made him start, and then he caught sight of someone leaning over the railing. For a fraction of a second he thought the whole affair was a joke or a dream, and then the man staggered into the room, and he caught a glimpse of his face in the dusk ; but it was not Firmstone.

'What's up, man ? Who the devil are you. and where's Firmstone *sahib* ? For God's sake speak ! Are you hurt ? Here, give me a match quickly.' He felt on the table, knocked over a glass with a crash, and closed on a box of matches. Next minute with trembling fingers he had struck one. The light flared for a moment, and Datta stood before him, pale and shaking ; he pointed to a heap in the corner of the veranda ; but before he could speak the heap rose up, and there was Firmstone, dishevelled and distraught.

'Firmstone ! What *is* the matter ? Speak, for heaven's sake !'

Firmstone laughed a queer jangling laugh. 'Look !' he said, pointing to the roof where the great beam was. 'It's bent ; I saw it. Before it was straight, then I saw it bend, like . . . like . . . oh, indiarubber.' He laughed again and dabbed at his brow.

Bruce took his friend by the arm, and sat him in a chair. He couldn't make head or tail of it ; no use taking this jargon seriously anyhow.

'Bent ?' he said stupidly, as though it were a new word to him. 'Of course, old boy ; it would be. You've been reading Einstein : everything's badly bent according to him—everything straight, that is.' He looked up at the great beam, dimly stretched across the darkness, and at the sagging cobwebs. It looked different now, somehow, and suddenly he smelt something. It pervaded the place, suggesting sour unwholesome things in an indefinite way, but he could not trace it to any particular source ; only he felt suddenly sick and faint.

Firmstone sat down and mopped his brow. His fright was over. Already he had got a grip of himself and his iron self-control, which had melted in the heat of one awful moment, was rapidly cooling to its usual hardness.

'I'm sorry to have wakened you, Bruce. Damned silly of me ; but I did get a shock when that blasted beam began to bend. Thought I was drunk, and the hut tumbling on top of me. Optical

illusion I suppose. Datta!' He had caught sight of the Indian, cowering in the corner. 'What the devil are you doing here?'

'You called, *sahib*! I came to master, fearing trouble.'

'Called? You're crazy! I fell down; fainted, I believe. I say, what's that infernal smell—did you get it, Bruce? Candles, Datta, quick: the lamp's finished. You go back to bed, Bruce; I'm turning in very soon now—no use stopping up all night.'

'No, Firmstone. If anyone turns in, you must. We aren't at the end of all this yet. Besides——' He broke off abruptly. 'Sh! did you hear it? There it is again.'

Both men listened intently; the silence was deathly, and only the beating of their hearts clanged in their ears. A lizard called 'tucktoo' very loudly, making them jump, and then the lamp gave a last gasping flare and went out, leaving them in complete darkness. Then the keen ears of Firmstone caught a sound; it seemed to come from the veranda outside, and drawing his revolver he took up a position close to the opening, and waited. For a full minute he stood thus, while Bruce hardly dared to breathe; and then incredible things happened swiftly.

From the utter darkness of the room behind, in which Bruce had been sleeping, came an appalling scream, human it seemed, and yet not human in its dreadful surprise and agony. It swelled up to a crescendo, and died swiftly away in horrid chokings and gurglings; there was an odd sound, 'like a man walking on sticks,' Bruce said afterwards, and the scream ceased abruptly. Then silence: the evil smell increased.

The Englishmen, stiff with horror, stumbled across into the bedroom. 'A light, quick,' gasped Firmstone, and at that moment there came a crash and a roar as the whole place was lit up with a sizzle of blue glare: the monsoon had broken at last.

'Stand back, Bruce, for God's sake! Do you know what it is? There . . . look!' But in the excitement, his eyes blinded by the recent glare, Bruce saw nothing; only he heard a sound as of a carpet being dragged across the room. Then Firmstone found the matches, and struck a light: the candle-wick burnt down, and straightened itself slowly in a thin yellow flame as Bruce held it aloft.

'My God!' he exclaimed softly, appalled at what he saw. In the middle of the room, on his side, his limbs jutting out at unnatural angles, lay Laphai Noun, very still: even as they looked, he jerked rigidly on to his back and they could see at a glance that

his body was misshapen ; he was quite dead. For a minute they stared in horror, fascinated by that queer figure.

'The devil !' whispered Bruce ; 'so he meant to do us in !' He pointed to a long knife lying a yard away from the dead man.

But Firmstone turned on him almost fiercely. In the shock of discovery, though he had never really underrated the Chingpaw's true character, he regretted ever having spoken a harsh word to him in haste. He answered coolly, however, 'Bruce, Laphai risked much more than his life to save you and me ; he risked his *future* life. You see, Laphai believes in *nats*. He was ready to propitiate this one—or to slay it. He has propitiated it to the uttermost farthing.'

'*Nats* ?' said Bruce, stupidly passing his hand over his face. The inevitable reaction which comes to fever-ridden men after unnatural excitement was setting in, and his temperature was rising. 'Then why did he let us sleep here ?'

'Because I insisted ; and he was afraid of Datta, who is a Hindu, and rather partial to—' He did not finish the sentence, for another blinding blaze of light and an almost simultaneous crash cut short the sentence. The hammer of rain on mailed leaves followed instantly, as the storm broke right overhead.

'Datta !' shouted Bruce. The light showed a big gap in the wall, which led to the bath shed. Datta, squatting in the opening, was silhouetted against the next flash, his hands uplifted in an attitude of prayer.

'So !' said Firmstone softly at last, 'you knew too ! What a pity Laphai's *nat* wasn't more discriminating.'

'But what killed Laphai ?' shouted Bruce : the suspense was unbearable. He could not follow his companion, whose intimate knowledge of the native mind and of unpleasant facts had already, it seemed, reconstructed the entire scene.

'Quick ! the door,' answered Firmstone ; 'look out towards that clump of bamboos by the *nalla*.'

They dashed across to the door and looked out into the streaming darkness. The night was full of the noise of storm—the creaking stems, the tin clatter of hard leaves, and above all the hiss of rain. At that moment the sky was torn open again, and a perfect flood of fire leapt out, lighting the world instantly with high-tension illumination. Long after the light had gone out the scene remained riveted on the observers' sight—swaying trees, whirling leaves, and stair-rods of rain bayoneting the hard ground. But their vision

was glued on the immense groaning clump of bamboos, which Firmstone had predicted as the climax of their adventure. They were just in time to see it.

'Good God!' shouted Bruce, for the first time filled with real horror and loathing. 'The beam—bent!' He watched fascinated as the last six or eight feet of a gigantic snake dragged itself slowly into the haven of the bamboo clump. 'I know what killed Laphai now!'

'The *Nat* of Nogmung,' said Firmstone solemnly. 'Laphai Noungh may have suspected, but he didn't know. To him it was just a *nat*. But he suspected Datta, who carries a knife, and he came to watch by our side. He had seen Datta saying prayers to a hamadryad once, and he suspected a trick.'

'And Datta?' asked Bruce.

'He knew!' replied Firmstone. 'He knew, and he was afraid Laphai knew too; he was afraid Laphai might do in his snake, the sacred symbol of his caste. So he tried to keep him away. He wanted to worship—oh no, I don't think we can make it attempted murder.'

But when at last, after a night of terror and adventure, morning came, the snake worshipper had disappeared.

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### SHAKESPEARE'S WORST.

(Read to a Club, after dinner, long ago, to give them something to contradict.)

SHAKESPEARE's success is essentially a success of posterity. During his life, and for some considerable time after his death, no one thought of hailing him as a very remarkable or extraordinary genius ; no one wrote his life, no one took the trouble to make an authentic edition of his works. He attained, indeed, a fair degree of prominence as a playwright, especially at a time when there were but few, and he played before the Queen ; but there is no record of the Queen having expressed any great pleasure in the performances. As, however, *Love's Labour's Lost* was one of the first to be played before her, we may assume that Queen Elizabeth had a very strong stomach for dramatic entertainment : and if she sat out this play, she accomplished a feat which, probably, no modern audience could be even induced to attempt. Yet in *Love's Labour's Lost* there is ample promise of that unique literary production of which we shall have more to say : the wit of Shakespeare—the one faculty which we can say belongs unmistakably to the man himself, not found in the originals from whom he copied, not akin to anything in other writers of his day, not attributable, in the easy method by which we explain that which we do not understand, to the spirit of the age. An admirer of Mr. Wilde's works has said, in a preface to 'Salome,' that 'Mr. Wilde's French is peculiarly his own' ; and we may say the same of Shakespeare's wit ; it is a product which stands absolutely by itself. In his conception of what is funny Shakespeare is in a position of splendid isolation ; and, inasmuch as this wit appears almost more abundantly in *Love's Labour's Lost* than in any other play, we may, perhaps, regard *Love's Labour's Lost* as being, in this sense, the most characteristic of all Shakespeare's plays. Here is a choice example :

Callest thou my love ' hobby-horse ' ?

No, master ; the hobby-horse is but a colt, and your love perhaps a hackney. But have you forgot your love ?

Almost I had.

Negligent student ! Learn her by heart.

By heart and in heart, boy.

And out of heart, master : all those three I will prove.

What wilt thou prove ?

A man, if I live ; and this, by, in, and without, upon the instant : by heart you love her, because your heart cannot come by her ; in heart you love her, because your heart is in love with her ; and out of heart you love her, being out of heart that you cannot enjoy her. I am all these three.

And three times as much more, and yet nothing at all.

Fetch hither the swain : he must carry me a letter.

A message well sympathised ; a horse to be ambassador for an ass !

Ha, ha ! What sayest thou ?

Marry, sir, you must send the ass upon the horse, for he is very slow-gaited. But I go.

The way is but short ; away !

As swift as lead, sir.

Thy meaning, pretty ingenious ? Is not lead a metal heavy, dull and slow ?

Minime, honest master ; or rather, master, no.

I say lead is slow.

You are too swift, sir, to say so. Is that lead slow which is fired from a gun ? . . .

A most acute juvenal ; volable and free of grace !

A distinguished member of this club has published a comprehensive survey of English and foreign literature as a preface to some critical remarks upon Mr. Thomas Hardy ; and I was somewhat astonished to find there, amongst much admirable matter, a high praise of Shakespeare's clowns, as being deeply humorous and entirely true to life. Our writer, indeed, affirms that he has heard the peasants of Dorsetshire, when sitting in their public-houses, talk like Shakespeare's clowns. We shall naturally hesitate to affirm that to be impossible which our friend has stated to be a fact ; yet I should have more readily believed him had he told us that he had heard ladies in a ball-room speak the language of Richardson, or that he had taken part in a regimental messroom in an interchange of sallies after the manner of George Meredith. The life of the Dorsetshire peasantry must indeed be a gloomy martyrdom, if in their hours of ease they are exposed to the tiresome flatulence of their village Launcelot and Gobbo, the intolerable Snug, the joiner, the whole tribe of hair-splitting drawers and choplogic murderers, and, above all, the puerilities of persistent grave-diggers.

Whose grave is this, sir ?

Mine, sir.

A pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet.

I think it be thine, indeed ; for thou liest in it.

You lie out on it, sir, and therefore it is not yours : for my part  
I do not lie in it, and yet 'tis mine.

Thou dost lie in it, to be in it, and say it is thine : 'tis for the  
dead, not for the quick ; therefore thou liest.

'Tis a quick lie, sir ; 'twill away again, from me to you.

It is, indeed, a pitiable sight to see a conscientious and well-meaning actor on the stage deliver passages such as this, with which Shakespeare's plays abound, half impressed with the idea that there must be a joke somewhere in it, trusting that the audience will see the joke, if he cannot see it himself ; and so, affecting a sprightly alertness, with plentiful gesture of that light kind which is supposed to be appropriate to telling dialogue, he gives out the lines for all they are worth. The other actor, or maybe group of actors, do their best to pull at their end of the wretched damp cracker ; they lean forward to catch the quip, they receive it with a kind of preconcerted cackle that resembles nothing so little as a spontaneous chorus of laughter ; and if the joke is more than usually disappointing, they will perhaps slap their thighs with a ghastly hypocrisy of being distorted with merriment, and turn to one another wagging their heads. Clever actors, giving out trash with all the stage effects of amusing dialogue, will usually succeed to some small extent in imposing upon the audience. A well-trained audience, that trusts its actor, will have ready a smile anticipatory, when it sees a favourite actor leading up to a joke : yet it is a curious sight, to see the spectators expecting, with their mouths half open, some choice morsel of wit, and getting nothing but their bellies full of wind. The majority, overawed by the authority of Shakespeare, wait until they are quite sure that the point *has* come, and then laugh as a matter of discipline : and the house feels a vague relief when the serious business of the play is resumed.

How different from the appearance which the theatre presents when Sheridan is substituted for Shakespeare, and when the actors are unable to proceed with the dialogue—as I saw one not so long ago at the Court Theatre—by reason of the interruption of the laughter of the audience at every line. Indeed, Shakespeare had no conception of the way in which to construct a mirth-moving

dialogue. The soundest of his critics, Dr. Johnson, thus characterises his fatal weakness :

' A quibble is to Shakespeare what luminous vapours are to the traveller ; he follows it at all adventures ; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disposition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incident, or en chaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world and was content to lose it.'

The first and the last emotion which the funny parts of Shakespeare produce in one's mind is a feeling of profound pity for the actor who has to represent them, such a pity as we should probably feel even for our worst enemy, were he condemned to take the part of clown in *Twelfth Night*, or Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Who would not relent, if he saw the sentence carried out, at these side-splitting lines :

‘ Thou speakest aright ;  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile  
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal :  
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
In very likeness of a roasted crab ;  
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob  
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.  
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me ;  
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,  
And “ Tailor ” cries, and falls into a cough ;  
And then the whole quire hold their hips and loffe,  
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear  
A merrier hour was never wasted there.’

The fact is that there is no right way to deliver such lines as these, and cannot be. Lines intended to make one laugh, especially

when they are long speeches, are only successful when the actor allows the lines to speak for themselves, the fun to come out spontaneously, and the laughter to follow of itself. An actor affecting merriment, in order to force his audience to laugh, is always offensive ; and it requires the greatest care on his part always to keep behind the audience in their laughter, and not to lead them. But in Puck's lines given above it is impossible to keep to these directions. It is impossible to laugh less than the audience would, if left to themselves, at Puck's description of his booby-traps, because the audience would not laugh at all, except, perhaps, an occasional guffaw from a schoolboy or a sailor in the gallery. Therefore, these lines are always ridiculously overacted, and delivered in spurts, amid gushes of bubbling, hard-suppressed merriment, with articulation impeded by laughter : and it is worth noticing that this style of delivery is permitted on the stage nowhere except in Shakespeare's plays. Such behaviour on the part of an actor in giving any really amusing lines would kill the fun in them ; but where there is no hope of raising a genuine laugh, perhaps the best choice of evils is to offend in the manner which we have described, rather than to speak the lines simply and let them fall flat. Indeed, I have frequently noticed some of the better actors, in order more effectually to cover the nakedness of the feebler jests, laugh so consumedly while delivering them, as to render the words inaudible altogether ; and probably this method of strangling Shakespeare's jests at their birth is the kindest, upon the whole, to all concerned.

But it is not merely the funny part of our great dramatist's work which is impossible for a self-respecting actor to deliver to a self-respecting audience in an appropriate manner. Next to clowning—a facile mixture of obscenity with cheap verbal juggling—the most frequent expedient which has been employed by Shakespeare for relieving his dramas is a certain airy, fantastic vein, very well adapted for the production of most charming literature, but not always well fitted for the purposes of the dramatist. It is, of course, a commonplace to say that there may be plays which are good literature but not well suited to the stage ; and it is equally true that interspersed in good plays there may be portions which, as literature, are very pleasing, but which on the stage are out of place. There may be fancies too delicate for the footlights, sentiments too pretty, thoughts too intimate : and if writers, instead of sending these fancies, sentiments, and thoughts to be nicely bound and

issued by a publisher, insist on giving them to the world by the mouth of an actor, the result is that instead of a drama we have a recitation. As a reader one admires, but as a spectator one inwardly protests against Mercutio's great prize composition about Queen Mab. We know, when we hear the fatal line : 'O then, I see, Queen Mab hath been with you,' that we are going to be made thoroughly uncomfortable for five minutes ; that, although poetry is going to be recited, it is going to be spoiled, and the sole melancholy pleasure left is to speculate as to the originality of the actor, and to see whether he will invent a new way of failing in a speech in which every actor does fail, has failed, and will fail, until *Romeo and Juliet* is played without it. Yet the fault is not the actor's, but the dramatist's. Put this speech to the test which all acting must be ready to bear ; ask whether the speech fails because the actor does not deliver it as it would be delivered in real life. Is not the answer plain, that under no circumstances whatever would a man, speaking to men, deliver such a harangue *viva voce* ? A friend, with whom I saw the play at the Lyceum one day, passed the usual strictures upon the manner in which this speech was delivered, and remarked that it was a pity that the actor had conceived Mercutio as being under the influence of liquor when he made his great Queen Mab oration. Possibly the actor had asked himself the question, under what possible circumstances could such a speech be rendered, and had given up the hypothesis of sobriety as rendering the problem insoluble. There is a legend that Shakespeare admitted to a friend that he had been obliged to kill Mercutio in the third act, since, otherwise, Mercutio would have killed him, and this legend may perhaps be taken as indicating that Shakespeare was dimly conscious of the fatal effect which these lyrical interludes would have upon his reputation as a dramatist.

If we turn from these interludes to the main construction of the plays, we shall find here equally that Shakespeare presents weak points for criticism in almost every direction : so much so that, in spite of the great enthusiasm with which his plays are very justly received, I do not suppose, nevertheless, that there is a single one which is ever acted as Shakespeare wrote it, nor without very considerable changes, transpositions, and omissions.

The question has often been argued, whether Shakespeare's disdain of the unities of time and place was conscious or unconscious ; whether it proceeded from a desire to revolutionise the drama, or from ignorance of the first principles. The most probable

supposition seems to be that when he began he knew as much about the unities of time and place as he did about, let us say, the geography of Italy, when he transported his heroes from one inland place to another inland place by sea ; or about Greek literature when he made Hector quote Aristotle. But it has been surmised that as he grew in importance he must have had friends who pointed out to him how far he departed from the canons previously recognised, and that then he must have determined to ignore them. I do not know whether there are any who still hold that the dramatist should endeavour to restrict his play to the representation of one continuous scene, and, although it is undoubtedly the case that much greater skill is required to produce an interesting play all in one scene, yet the ordinary spectator, if giving his vote, would probably decide that far greater pleasure is given by the changes of scene and the licence of allowing a lapse of time between the acts : and, in truth, there is no other criterion of what should decide the question but the pleasure of the audience. But however much we may concede to the playwright the liberty to infringe the unities, thus much, at least, both the stage manager and the audience have a right to ask from him : that he should not conceive that his stage is a kaleidoscope. Many a magic-lantern lecture has been given at a village entertainment, and has been accounted a brilliant pictorial success, which has had fewer slides shown on the screen than Shakespeare has given scenes to his principal plays. No wonder Shakespeare has spelt ruin, when he has shifted at will his scene every five minutes, sometimes out of very wantonness, moving from a public place in a town to a street in the same town, and then to another street.

If a modern dramatist should approach the manager of a London theatre with a play written in this style, what would Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson say of him at the next meeting of the Playgoers' Club ? Take the changes in *Romeo and Juliet*. A public place, a street, a room in Capulet's house, a street, a hall in Capulet's house, an open place adjoining Capulet's garden, Capulet's garden, Friar Laurence's cell, a street, Capulet's garden, Friar Laurence's cell, a public place, a room in Capulet's house, Friar Laurence's cell, a room in Capulet's house, loggia to Juliet's chamber, Friar Laurence's cell, a room in Capulet's house, Juliet's chamber, Capulet's hall—Juliet's chamber, a street in Mantua, Friar Laurence's cell, a churchyard. No one can pretend that this variety of scene adds in any way to the merit of the piece or the pleasure which it gives ; these constant interruptions

pass altogether beyond refreshing the attention, and tend to produce in one's mind a sense of fidget. If one is watching a Greek play, dull as the scenery is with its altar or its pillars, at any rate there is a sense of security in feeling that one knows the worst, and that one may allow one's mind freely to dwell upon the action of the piece without apprehension of fresh altars and fresh temples being needlessly obtruded upon one's notice. But at a play of Shakespeare's one is never allowed to forget the scene-shifter : a fact which most people illogically and unjustly impute as a crime to the management. How often does one hear of the undue prominence of the upholsterer in the modern Shakespeare productions, contrasted with the simplicity of the scenery under Phelps' management. But the truth is, that this prominence of the upholsterer is due to the dramatist himself, who had not the patience, or the concentration, or the knowledge, to construct his play so that it could be mounted simply : and the consequence is that nearly every act has to begin with a front cloth scene, the actors cramped up in a three-foot passage, with some stagey dialogue to pass the time while the heavy set is being prepared within : and the audience have no sooner found their bearings and begun to follow the play than the scene-shifter again asserts himself, the story is again dislocated, and the audience again have to cast about to pick up the scent. Hold what theory we will about the unities of time and place, at any rate it must be admitted that the conditions of the drama do require some concentration of the figures to a common focus, whereas Shakespeare appears to regard himself as perfectly free to move his stage wherever the story may lead him, and to take snapshots at his characters with a Kodak whenever he can run them down. Should anyone do me the honour of replying to my remarks under this head, I feel tolerably confident that he will begin by pointing out that I have forgotten that in Shakespeare's own day his plays were acted without, or almost without, any scenery at all : a fact which appears to me by no means to palliate, but rather to aggravate, the fault of construction to which I have referred : for where there is no scenery—as many of us must have observed at penny readings, school prize-givings, and other similar occasions of penance—we are on tenterhooks till we have guessed from the dialogue where the scene is laid, and each change of scene would be an additional trial ; while if, as many suppose, Shakespeare had to resort to the clumsy device of sign-boards indicating where the scene is laid, it would become even more imperative to resort to

these external aids as seldom as possible. Except the expense of time and money, all the reasons which would operate now to reduce the number of shifts would operate even more strongly in Shakespeare's day : nor do I think that it will be found, among the more finished playwrights of the early seventeenth century, that the importance of concentrating the action into reasonable limits of time and place was neglected.

So far, while speaking of Shakespeare's wit and of the loose construction of his plays, I suppose I have been upon ground that is not likely to raise controversy. It remains to say a few words of heresy as to our dramatist's power in treatment of character, and in selection of episodes. It would be an interesting exhibition, if some enterprising lessee of one of the London Galleries should make a collection of pictures in which each great artist should be represented, not by his masterpieces, but by his pot-boilers ; and it would be instructive to see whether, in painting, those artists who are able to climb the greatest heights are also those who can descend to the lowest depths. In literature I cannot help thinking that such a question would be easily answered by Shakespeare's exhibits. Lord Tennyson, with some of his later poems, would, of course, be a strong competitor, but Shakespeare would be able to cull from the very middle of his very best plays samples of bathos such as can only grow in the lowest depths of the valleys that surround Parnassus. Be the competitors who they will, it will be difficult for any author to show such a combination of the sublime and the contemptible as the interpolation in *Macbeth*, at the height of the crisis, when the air is thick with foreboding, of a frivolous and tedious interruption in the shape of a dialogue between Malcolm and Macduff—Malcolm first endeavouring to shake Macduff's faith in his character, and then reassuring it. Not only is this episode foreign to the action of the play, not only does it impede the action, and unsettle the characters, but in its execution it ludicrously fails of its effects. What man, either on the stage or off it, who wishes to raise a deception of this kind, would think of taking his friend apart and imputing vices to himself in abstract terms ? If Malcolm wanted to pass as a libertine, he should have contrived that Macduff should see him in a compromising position ; if as avaricious, ambitious, turbulent, he should have acted the part. Even granting for a moment that he could possibly resort to the absurdity of wholesale self-accusation, he would at least give instances having a colour of credibility in them, and, in a word, accuse himself of

acts, not qualities ; but Malcolm stands up and reduces Macduff to the last pitch of despair and indignation by merely spouting :

‘ With this there grows  
In my most ill-composed affection such  
A staunchless avarice, that, were I king,  
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,  
Desire his jewels, and this other's house :  
And my more-having would be as a sauce  
To make me hunger more ; that I should forge  
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,  
Destroying them for wealth.’

This foolish and empty declaration is followed by an equally vapid retraction, which leaves Macduff mumbling, as well he may, at the imbecility of the whole performance. As a companion exhibit to this scene from *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's backers would produce, from *King Lear*, the astonishing scene of Gloster's attempted suicide by his leap down Dover cliff, a make-belief worthy only of a child's charade, and rendered additionally absurd by Edgar's attendance in the double character of the man who accompanies him to the top of the cliff and of a stranger who meets him at the bottom. It is almost incomprehensible that a great dramatist should have thought to produce any but a ludicrous effect by bringing on an old man to jump in the sight of the audience from one plank of the stage to another, and then to wake up and fancy that he has leapt down Dover cliff : and yet a comic scene, for Gloster, when he has just undergone barbarities far too disgusting for the stage, would be so evidently out of place that we must needs conclude that this jump down Dover cliff is intended seriously.

Dr. Johnson's criticism on Edgar's famous speech here, descriptive of the view from Dover cliff, is worth mentioning. Dr. Johnson was fond of maintaining, especially in the presence of Garrick, that there was no passage in Shakespeare equal to Congreve's description of the temple in the ‘ Mourning Bride.’ ‘ You can show me,’ said Johnson, ‘ no passage where there is simply a description of material objects, without any admixture of moral notions, which produces such an effect.’ Mr. Murphy mentioned Shakespeare's description of the night before the Battle of Agincourt ; but it was observed that it had men in it. Mr. Davies suggested the speech of Juliet, in which she figures herself awaking in the tomb of her ancestors. Someone mentioned the description of Dover cliff.

'Johnson : "No, sir ; it should be all precipice, all vacuum. The crows impede your fall. The diminished appearance of the boats, and other circumstances, are all very good description ; but do not impress the mind at once with the horrible idea of immense height. The impression is divided ; you pass on by computation, from one stage of the tremendous space to another. Had the girl in the 'Mourning Bride' said she could not cast her shoe to the top of one of the pillars in the temple, it would not have aided the idea, but weakened it."'

On another occasion, when Dr. Johnson began upon the same theme, remarking that 'Shakespeare never has six lines together without a fault,' Boswell very promptly turned the conversation by asking 'What do you think of Dr. Young's "Night Thoughts," Sir ?'

If there were ever such an exhibition as I have suggested, for the worst work of the best masters, Shakespeare's supporters would probably have to admit that he is not entitled to full credit for originality in all his achievements of the inappropriate, the unpleasing, or the incredible. His puns and quibbles are probably as bad as anyone's, but he was not the first to bring those futilities on to the English stage. Lyly preceded him in this, and with his plays on words—his 'I call my scimetar my smiter' and 'You say that time and tide wait for no man ? If I am tied I do wait'—set a fashion which Shakespeare did but follow. Or again, we are often astonished at the pedantry with which Shakespeare interlards his plays with Latin quotations and classical allusions. The Latin quotations are not very abstruse ; many of them come from the primer in use at the Stratford Grammar School. The classical allusions, on the other hand, are frequently notable for their obscurity : there are two in the *Merchant of Venice* which would probably defeat an audience drawn from the Head Masters' Conference. But here again we must trace the fault to earlier origins ; the craft of the playwright, when Shakespeare entered upon it, had partly been formed by schoolmasters writing pieces for their pupils to perform, and taking the opportunity to display their erudition. Again, some of Shakespeare's scenes, such as Macbeth's conversation with the murderers, and Malvolio's reading of the letter under a fire of running comment from Maria and Sir Toby, and Hamlet's delivery of thirty lines of his great soliloquy in Ophelia's presence, and sudden discovery of Ophelia's presence when he reaches the thirty-first, seem designed to illustrate a peculiar theory of the invisibility

of human figures upon the stage : but here too he has only bettered the instruction of earlier dramatists.

I think, however, that Shakespeare himself must have the credit for having invented, perfected, and established his Law of Unrecog-nisability. This law, as you know, rests upon the great discovery that if a girl be dressed as a boy, neither her brother, nor her lover, nor her husband will know who she is until she changes back into her petticoats. This great principle operates in *Twelfth Night* to keep Viola a stranger to her brother Sebastian, and in *The Merchant of Venice* to make Portia unrecognisable to Bassanio, and Nerissa to Gratiano ; but it reaches its fullest power in *As You Like It*, where the action of the piece is only kept going by the persistent inability of Orlando to pierce the obvious disguise of Rosalind. In any competition such as I have suggested, I should expect Shakespeare to win on his Law of Unrecognisability ; and I think he would also attain high commendation on another exhibit, viz., the Character of a Gentleman. His claims to distinction here would rest on Petrucio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Claudio in *Measure for Measure*, and Claudio in *Much Ado*.

The favour in which the play of *Much Ado* is commonly held is, no doubt, due to the passages between Benedick and Beatrice—passages where, as usual, Shakespeare fails in attempting to provide his reputed wits with brilliant conversation ; but where we are willing enough to take their brilliancy on trust in consideration of the masterly manner in which their characters are drawn and the situations in which they are exhibited. But if one considers the play itself of *Much Ado*, one cannot but conclude that we are behind the seventeenth century in our dramatic appreciation. The seventeenth century could not stand the play of *Much Ado*, but extracted from it the whole of the Beatrice and Benedick scenes, thrust them into *Measure for Measure*, and thus made a new and, no doubt, a greatly improved play : for the serious action of *Measure for Measure* is splendid, the light relief is there provided by one of Shakespeare's insufferable clowns, whom the play could very well afford to lose, receiving in exchange Benedick and Beatrice. But as for the main plot of *Much Ado*, it is difficult to say whether it is more clumsy or more disgusting. Claudio, who has given no previous signs of being the outrageous cad that he afterwards proves, is in love with Hero : to him comes the conventional bastard and mischief-maker, Don John, and tells him that Hero is unchaste. The probability is that any man so placed as Claudio

would at first fly into a rage, and would then cross-examine Don John further, when the flimsiness of the hoax would have been made apparent: but the one absurdly impossible reply to such accusations is that which Shakespeare puts into Claudio's mouth: 'If I see anything to-night why I should not marry her, to-morrow, in the congregation, where I wed, there will I shame her.' After this extraordinary reply, we are prepared to see Claudio fall an easy dupe to Borachio's clumsy device, and for the outrageous scene in the church. The subsequent reconciliation with this repulsive character is an appropriately lame ending to this offensive story, which my Shakespearian editor—one of the usual type of enthusiasts—rapturously describes as 'a comedy such as no other man has made—a comedy not of manners or of sentiment, but of life viewed under its profoundest aspects, whether of the grave or the ludicrous.'

A GADARENE.

*DR. JOHNSON AT HARWICH.*

THE journey of Johnson and Boswell to Harwich in 1763 is usually regarded only as an isolated episode in their friendship ; it has, however, a larger value and is interesting also from another point of view. We obtain a picture of a scene in England in the eighteenth century with these two famous figures in the foreground. For Harwich was a busy port, one from which there was constant communication with Holland, where vessels could lie quietly at anchor and where passengers could embark and land in reasonable comfort.

Coming to our two travellers, the incidents of the trip should be recalled. It was on Friday, August 4, 1763, that Johnson and Boswell left London by coach for Harwich, Boswell being bound for Utrecht to study law. They stayed on their journey for a night at Chelmsford, and on August 5, hot and dusty, after a morning's drive of twenty-one miles, reached Harwich at noon, in time for a midday dinner. They would, no doubt, alight at the Three Cups in Church Street, then and for many years after the principal inn of this seaport. When they had finished this midday dinner, which perhaps was served in the room in which, at the end of the century, Nelson used to dine, the Doctor and his young friend walked to the church which is hard by, at the top of the street. Here a singular scene occurred, for Johnson made Boswell kneel at the altar, telling him that as he was about to leave his native country he should recommend himself to the protection of his Creator and Redeemer. Johnson, unlike most men, carried his religion into his daily life. The prayer that his work might be productive of good, which he wrote before he issued the *Rambler*, is famous, and now at Harwich Boswell must follow his example. From the church the Doctor and Boswell walked down Church Street to the beach, beyond which in the quiet waters of the Stour the vessel lay at anchor which was to carry the young Scotsman across the North Sea.

To-day the scene can easily be realised. If the steamboat piers were removed one would see the streets of the little town ending on a sloping beach in the estuary of the Stour ; to the right, then as now, round the point was a broad expanse of water which led to the open sea. The packet would lie at high water close to the land ready to sail, and boatmen would carry passengers to her in their small boats. As the vessel got under weigh Johnson stood watching its departure. ‘ I kept my eyes upon him,’ writes Boswell in his inimitable way, ‘ for a considerable time, while he remained

rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner, and at last I perceived him walk back into the town and he disappeared.' Boswell, as he told him, had feared that if the Doctor's return to London were delayed it would be 'terrible' to be detained in so dull a place. But the only reply he received was a characteristic reproof—'Don't, sir, accustom yourself to use big words for little matters.'

After the packet had sailed Boswell disappears from the scene, but without his narrative one may well imagine Johnson hurrying in his lumbering way, 'rolling his majestic frame,' up Church Street, and then stopping out of breath on The Green, whence he would have an uninterrupted view of the estuary and could watch the sails of the packet disappear down the broad channel to the North Sea, as one may to-day see the steamers passing to Belgium and Holland. Then the Doctor had but to return to the inn and leave Harwich by the afternoon coach.

The popular idea of Johnson is of a Londoner who found London the only place worth living in. This mythical Johnson has been created not a little from sayings of his own, such as 'a man who is tired of London is tired of life,' and 'the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross.' But no one was more keen to visit other localities or more desirous of personal knowledge of peoples and places. When he wrote to tell Boswell that the 'Journey to the Hebrides' was on the eve of publication, he concluded by asking, 'Shall we touch the Continent?' He was, at the moment, already thinking of another tour, and when Boswell, in 1763, was considering a visit to Holland, 'Johnson,' he says, 'advises me in general to move about a good deal'—the advice of a born traveller. The short visit to Harwich is further evidence of this spirit of adventure.

The truth is that Johnson had all the instincts of a traveller, curiosity, hardihood, courage, and patience, more so than any other man of letters of his time. No better evidence of this can be found than the statement of Mrs. Thrale, who so well understood her old friend.

'His desire,' she says, 'to go abroad, particularly to see Italy, was very great. . . . He loved, indeed, the very act of travelling, and I cannot tell how far one might have taken him in a carriage before he would have wished for refreshment. He was therefore in some respects an admirable companion on the road, as he piqued himself on feeling no inconvenience and on despising no accommodations. On the other hand, however, he expected no one else to feel any, and felt exceedingly inflamed with anger if anyone complained of the rain, the sun, or the dust.'

Before this Harwich expedition the Doctor had visited Oxford—once in July 1754, when he remained for purposes of literary research for five weeks, and again after the death of his mother in 1759. This time he went merely, as far as one can judge, for the sake of the trip. Then in 1762 he joined Sir Joshua Reynolds in an expedition, as it may well be called, to Plymouth. Sir Joshua had a good reason for making this long and fatiguing journey; he was going to his homeland. But obviously it was love of travel which caused Johnson to accompany Reynolds, that and nothing more. Unfortunately for us, this journey occurred before Johnson and Boswell met, and only a few details of it have been preserved. I have been allowed to examine the diaries of Sir Joshua which are preserved in the Library of the Royal Academy; they contain, however, only bare entries of dates and places, nothing whatever of a personal nature. But they confirm the fact that the travellers left London on August 16 and arrived back on September 26. Still their perusal makes the journey now more vivid and lifelike, enabling one to visualise the movements of the two friends, though it adds nothing to our knowledge of this trip. For the particular purpose of this article, this is immaterial; it is the mere fact of the long journey to and from the West which shows how Johnson enjoyed travel. It is worth while also to recall the visit to old Mr. Langton—Bennet Langton's father—in Lincolnshire in 1764. At his house was a large library and pleasant company, but the journey was nevertheless a considerable one for a Londoner of sedentary habits. Again in August of the same year the Doctor paid a visit to Dr. Percy in Northamptonshire, necessitating a second long journey in one year. The trip to Harwich is more interesting and suggestive than any of these, because on this occasion Boswell was Johnson's companion. The day and a half which they spent on their way illustrates very well Mrs. Thrale's description of Johnson as a traveller, 'that he piqued himself on feeling no inconvenience,' for, so far from being bored by the confinement of the coach, he obviously enjoyed his talk with the elderly gentlewoman who was one of the company and his discussions with the young Dutchman on the criminal law of Holland. One is so accustomed to think of the Doctor at the Turk's Head, or at Streatham living a studious life, that it is difficult to visualise him in a coach, jolting through the Eastern Counties and conversing with his fellow-passengers. When one does, then one begins to appreciate Johnson the traveller, unfamiliar though in this form he is to most of us.

At any rate, it seems clear that Johnson would hardly have

accompanied Boswell to Harwich from personal affection only, for they first met on May 16 of the same year. The famous friendship was, therefore, but three months old. Another thing to bear in mind is that Johnson was constantly in a state of physical suffering, and one does not, unless in robust health, undergo fatigue such as that of a trip in a stage coach to Harwich and back, short as it might be considered, unless stimulated by some strong desire. The desire in Johnson was to visit a seaport which in his day was an important place of departure to, and arrival from, the Continent, and also to see another bit of England. A spirit of adventure and a thirst for knowledge which was not limited to the reading of books were causes of the journey to Harwich, illustrating vividly traits in Johnson's character which are often overlooked.

Another reason for the journey to Harwich has been suggested. Lord Rosebery, in his address on Johnson, delivered in 1909, said, 'there was much of the paternal in his relation to his biographer,' and again, 'he came to love Boswell.' These two feelings, in Lord Rosebery's opinion, were the causes of the trip to the Essex seaport. But paternal feeling, however strong, could not have been enough of itself to induce Johnson to incur the expense and trouble of a journey to Harwich and back to London in the dust of August, for Boswell was twenty-two years of age, and did not require the attention of a parent on a journey, and affection has not much opportunity of expression either in a stage-coach or at an inn. Actual love of travel in the largest sense in the first place, and the opportunity of taking the journey with an already appreciated companion, were clearly the causes of this expedition, rather than some kind of paternal feeling or mere 'love of Boswell.' This trip to Harwich is therefore memorable, partly because it was indicative of the travelling instinct in Johnson and partly because it was, as regards companionship with Boswell, in a sense experimental. In consequence of its success it was the humble precursor of and a precedent for the Doctor's famous journey to the Hebrides exactly ten years later with the same companion.

On this visit to Harwich he found the young Boswell an agreeable companion, 'whose gaiety of conversation and civility of manners,' as he wrote on the first page of the 'Journey,' 'are sufficient to counteract the inconveniences of travel.' May it not therefore be said, with some confidence, that but for this short trip to Harwich, on which Johnson tested Boswell as a travelling companion, there would perhaps have been no prolonged journey to the Western Isles?

E. S. ROSCOE.

### *CHARLOTTE BRONTË, HERETIC.*

THERE is peculiar fitness in making the Brontë parsonage a public shrine, which it now becomes by the gift and homage of Sir James Roberts, who bought it for the Brontë Society. Oddly enough, our sense of this fitness is due to a foreign critic. It had escaped due attention ; but M. l'Abbé Dimnet, who is hostile to the essential spirit of the sisters and the cult which cherishes their memory, treats them as intrepid, hapless Protestants, true daughters of the manse. Such they were ; and the sad rectory in its graveyard on a hill-top is consecrated to them very properly.

The cult, I think, has been at once too literary and too personal to be well aware of what the Brontë genius meant for modern thought in England. The Haworth novels and poems should be considered afresh. They were not only finely written in their time, but packed with ideas that have had large consequences for us ; and this may be their truest value. The novels have an old-fashioned structure, with many simplicities of far-fetched plot, and as a text for biographical speculation they are discussed sometimes a little tiresomely ; but one hears next to nothing of the fight made by a poor clergyman's girls for the emancipation of their sex, and for a gallant freedom of mind and heart. Charlotte and Emily are very significant figures now. The heroism of their narrow lives was not merely touching and rare but pregnant.

What an important book was 'Shirley' ! The heroine is the first of a distinguished company of fictional women, a type used and freely diversified by Meredith and a hundred successors. She might be claimed as the apostle of feminism very plausibly, although she never dreamed of a sex war. Remember Miss Keeldar's argument with Joe Scott, the overlooker, who thought that 'women is to take their husbands' opinions, both in politics and religion.' 'Consider yourself groaned down, and cried shame over, for such a stupid observation,' she retorts. ' You might as well say, men are to take the opinions of their priests without examination. Do you seriously think all the wisdom of the world is lodged in male skulls ? ' And she calls herself an esquire. ' Shirley Keeldar, Esquire, ought to be my style and title. They gave me a man's name ; I hold a man's position ; it is enough to inspire me with a touch of manhood.'

Indeed, the whole story girds at the plight of Victorian women. Hear gentle Caroline Helstone in 1849 :

“ ‘‘ Nobody in particular is to blame, that I can see, for the state in which things are ; and I cannot tell, however much I puzzle over it, how they are to be altered for the better ; but . . . I believe single women should have more to do . . . Look at the numerous families of girls in this neighbourhood, the Armitages, the Birtwhistles, the Sykeses. The brothers of these girls are every one in business or in professions ; their sisters have no earthly employment but household work and sewing ; no earthly pleasure but an unprofitable visiting ; and no hope, in all their life to come, of anything better. This stagnant state of things makes them decline in health ; they are never well ; and their minds and views shrink to wondrous narrowness. . . . Could men live so themselves ? Fathers ! You would wish to be proud of your daughters and not to blush for them—then seek for them an interest and an occupation which shall raise them above the flirt, the manœuvrer, the mischief-making tale-bearer. Give them scope and work—they will be your gayest companions in health, your tenderest nurses in sickness, your most faithful prop in age.’’ ”

M. Dimnet finds Shirley Keeldar ‘somewhat conventional’—as if she had not startled the year 1849 ! Is this her reward ? Shall we agree to confound the apostle with her disciples ? I think it time to do her better justice. He may deny a classic unity to the book’s plan, but for my part I am more concerned to note in how many ways it heralded the modern spirit. Who, in all she wrote, had more to say for the honesty of love than Charlotte Brontë, against the simpering shames of her day ? Her clerical critic says that she was Puritan, narrow and insular, and in this matter of love ‘sometimes on the edge of an abyss’ ; but listen to the two girls talking :

“ ‘‘ Is love, in your eyes, a crime, Caroline ? ”

“ ‘‘ Love a crime ! No, Shirley ;—love is a divine virtue. . . . When I see or hear either man or woman couple shame with love, I know their minds are coarse, their associations debased. Many who think themselves refined ladies and gentlemen, and on whose lips the word ‘vulgarity’ is for ever hovering, cannot mention ‘love’ without betraying their own innate and imbecile degradation : it is a low feeling in their estimation, connected only with low ideas for them.”

“ ‘‘ You describe three-fourths of the world, Caroline.”

"They are cold—they are cowardly—they are stupid on the subject, Shirley ! They never loved—they never were loved!"

"Thou art right, Lena ! And in their dense ignorance they blaspheme living fire, seraph-brought from a divine altar."

"They confound it with sparks mounting from Tophet!"

Such talk was something new ; and if to-day we live in healthier air, if the abyss does not smoke so noisomely, Charlotte should have some credit for that. Recall, too, the sympathy and good sense of all that is said in the novel about labour troubles, for even-handed dealing and for authority both. We are still no wiser with such troubles than Charlotte Brontë. Or read again its denunciations of religious assumptions and jealousies, then rife, and its flouts at snobbishness, as keen as Thackeray's. What a warrior she was !

I would define the Brontë spirit as a passionate sincerity of high feeling and thought, expressing itself with dauntless courage. All they wrote, like all that is known of them, suggests that in other times these gallant sisters would have gone to the stake rather than palter with any truth that seemed to them essential. The merely literary estimate of their work, like the Roman Catholic judgment of M. Dimnet, misses this rare virtue, which made them pioneers ; and it was a virtue of their Protestant breeding, clearly. True, the author of '*Les Sœurs Brontë*' is aware of it, and says that 'Charlotte was perhaps the last Englishwoman to delight in the idea of heresy, and to repeat the word "heretic" with a wild and provocative joy.' He only does not allow it to be a virtue. Well, but it made both her and Emily great Englishwomen, and they are pioneers to this day.

The literary estimate is less concerned with what they said than with the way they said it, and even so takes account of their sincerity as extremely rare. What else gives so much value to the melodramatic plot of '*Jane Eyre*', makes it read like a true story and glow and glitter with unflagging nervous English ? What but this magnificent sincerity, in '*Wuthering Heights*', carries Emily's bolder gift of imagination in its eagle-flight ? Heathcliff's passion for a dead love is the highest fetch of it. Genius ! we exclaim. Unmistakable ; but such a fetch was possible to the mind that wrote 'No coward soul is mine' and the heart that loved poor Branwell.

Emily's own legacy of free thought and high feeling is that poem, and, inside and outside the churches, how many people prize it like an anchor ? The marvel is that, when it was first published, few people knew any better than the Abbé Dimnet whether what lay behind it was scepticism or faith. She said the thousand creeds ('worthless

as withered weeds') were powerless to awaken doubt in her, 'holding so fast by God's infinity'; and that attitude towards them was new. The dread word 'heretic' does not seem to have troubled her. But it happened that Charlotte was thrown very much in contact with good souls who brandished it, and this proved fortunate for English readers. It gave us '*Villette*'.

There, again, is a novel in which one finds the seeds of many an English development and tendency. Its motive impulse was her hatred of such stultifications and underhand dealings as she identified with Jesuitry; but see how much it contains that is characteristically new and helpful. Glance again at her charming pictures of little Paulina Home, and say if, before she wrote, there was ever such understanding of a child's mind; if any author had looked at a child with eyes so truly those of a modern lover. And is not Ginevra Fanshawe the very type we have in mind nowadays when most mistrusting those young women who deserve to be called 'flappers'?

'She rattled on :

"My present business is to enjoy youth, and not to think of fettering myself, by promise or vow, to this man or that. When first I saw Isadore, I believed he would help me to enjoy it. I believed he would be content with my being a pretty girl, and that we should meet and part and flutter about like two butterflies, and be happy. *Va pour les beaux fats et les jolis fripons ! Vive les joies et les plaisirs ! A bas les grandes passions et les sévères vertus !*"'

Charlotte Brontë is never modern to the extent of being an extremist. She is passionate for good sense—for truth whole and balanced. As in '*Shirley*' with labour troubles, so in '*Villette*' with M. Paul Emanuel, she extols it; and if Paul be M. Héger, one understands her devotion for that embarrassed gentleman.

'I believed the little man not more earnest than right in what he said: with all his fire he was severe and sensible; he trampled Utopian theories under his heels; he rejected wild dreams with scorn; but, when he looked in the face of tyranny—oh, then there opened a light in his eye worth seeing; and when he spoke of injustice his voice gave no uncertain sound, but reminded me rather of the band-trumpet, ringing at twilight from the park.'

This balance of good sense, maintained with such a temperament as hers, was what assured her lasting triumph, and one would think that, for a French critic, it must be admirable. But M. Dimnet does

not understand a balance maintained in intellectual freedom and by virtue of it. There is a last word to be said about this distinguished biographer and his criticism, which has much to do with literary form but is concerned with her message only to call the spirit of it narrow. When he considers Charlotte Brontë as a woman, her moods alarm and baffle him. They are those of a fiery and delicate rebel, an *esprit fort*, for whom, he thinks, ‘the necessity was a vivifying (!) Catholicism,’ with a submissive mind like her sister Anne’s. He mistakes her humour for unkindness, and says she lacked the gift of tears. Her ‘equation,’ in fact, is alien for him.

Now, in ‘Villette,’ Charlotte made Paul Emanuel her hero because ‘all Rome could not put him into bigotry, nor the Propaganda itself make him a real Jesuit : he was born honest—a free man, not a slave.’ Her point of view is notmistakable. But M. Dimnet, mild and full of charity, would have it that she herself did not know it well. The story of Lucy Snowe and the confessional is founded on what she herself once did in Brussels, when distracted by depression and loneliness : this was told in a letter to Emily. ‘Knowing me as you do,’ she wrote, ‘you will think it odd, but when people are by themselves they have singular fancies’ ; and so she added : ‘I think you had better not tell papa. He will not understand that it was only a freak.’ Nor does the clerical biographer. Her tone, he remarks, ‘does not accord with the scene : we would rather think that Charlotte was, in these rather solemn circumstances, at one with her principles and habits of complete sincerity.’ And he pitied her, finding in her life ‘something eternally frustrated, which shadows our thoughts of her.’

Yes, there was something frustrated. She came of a consumptive stock, and, with her sisters and her brother, died young. She needed love, and knew it for two last years only. But, when M. Dimnet says that some day literature ‘will be relegated to its proper place, as intellect has been,’ and ‘there will no longer be pilgrimages to Haworth,’ he makes too light of English ideals. One can only thank him for setting us thinking about them once more. For one sees the Brontë sisters as prophets to whom we owe a great debt of homage and love, now acknowledged in their own country.

J. KEIGHLEY SNOWDEN.

### VLLORXA.

YES, I know them well, Mrs. Erling—that is, I know Sir Harold, but not Lady Massent. They say she's very agreeable, and he's—well, he would pass almost any test in the virtues. There's no reason why you shouldn't call on them: none at all.

You've heard of him, of course; I mean, before they came to live in the Square? He founded the Massent Hospital at Highgate, and the endowment is almost entirely his. That's what he got his knighthood for, you know.

Ah, I see you've heard something, then. No, she's not his first wife—but that's all so long ago. And besides, the world found in favour of Sir Harold, and decreed poor *Vllorxa* impossible. . . . That wasn't her real name, of course. Her name was Martina.

Perhaps I knew her better than I did her husband; at least, I seem to have done so, though I was pretty intimate with both of them, and naturally I've been thrown with Massent a lot these last ten years. Over the hospital, yes.

But she was one of those women—girls, I should say, for she was barely five-and-twenty—who, coming into your life anyhow, as it were, have remained. Or, to put it another way, she seemed to drop into the scheme by chance, and yet so rightly. Like a tint you sometimes hit on—hardly know how it got on to your palette (I'm talking shop, I'm afraid), but it just makes your canvas *live*. And that was how it was with her. The picture, you realised, had been wanting in—just something, before; and she completed it. . . .

Well, I suppose, in a longish life, one has let a good many friendships—faces even—slip out of mind from mere overcrowdedness. A modern drawing-room is the mirror of the modern memory; don't you think so? Almost ruthlessly selective. Ah! I intend a compliment, Mrs. Erling, and this room I find altogether charming. Not for the world would I have it a sea of upholstery, fringed with whatnots and islanded with settees. But one's remembrances, I maintain, should still be Victorian—stuffed with the best we can get.

And yet, between ourselves, it's not always the best that we retain as a part of our mental furniture, right to the end. It's

mostly a matter of accident, rather than taste, what our memories are furnished with after middle age ; and, as I say, Martina came in like a happy accident. . . .

An unlooked-for effect of sheer colour, I called her too ; and that really describes her. I doubt if she ever elaborated any purpose, ever saw to the end of any argument, but what she did and what she said was never blurred ; they touched the thing with a sort of radiance which, to me, still keeps it distinct. Whatever I remember of that time, in fact, she, Martina herself, has made it memorable.

When I first knew them, the Massents were living somewhere in Bayswater ; the address doesn't matter, for the houses are all so exactly alike in Bayswater that, it is said, people have sometimes lived for weeks at the wrong address without knowing it. And now I come to think of it, that may have helped to determine the cast of Massent's mind. It was so solid and well appointed—and so like a thousand others. He used to go every morning to the City by the same train from Notting Hill Gate (he has told me so himself) for fifteen years, and every evening a train from the Mansion House carried him home again, about a hundred pounds the richer, I suppose, but otherwise unchanged.

Nothing ever changed him : not success, nor the death of his mother, with whom he had lived ever since his father died and left him the business ; not his marriage with Martina. . . . He was too intimately identified with himself for that. But if one were to allow a difference, and at the risk of being epigrammatic, one might say that whereas formerly he had lived in a double-fronted house with a large brass knocker, now the double-fronted house and the large knocker lived in him. That was all.

I don't mean that he was selfish or any way bad—I have advised you to call there, haven't I ?—for he gave away, even then, really enormous sums in charity. He was generous and always carried himself like a gentleman. You can't keep a name in the City without a pretty solid title to respect. Oh, you can make a fortune, yes, but you can't keep a name ; and I never heard of Massent's being called in question. Besides, he wasn't all out for money ; perhaps, after all, that was what least occupied his mind, though I'm not sure. At any rate, he was a man of some cultivation, a man of taste. He collected a little, not very methodically, but he got together some of the best eighteenth-century mezzotints I know. They say he intends to leave them to the nation. You'll see them when you call.

And he was something of a student, too ; Derwent and he used to talk Shakespeare by the hour, and discuss the doubtful readings—for which Derwent generally had a suggestion to hand, wide enough of the mark, possibly, but at all events it served to give the passage some sort of meaning. Derwent had a hatred of anything vague and ragged ; you can tell that from his designs—all that is left of them. He burnt most of them, or Martina did, in the studio-stove before he died. But I haven't introduced Derwent yet ; I was speaking of Massent.

Where and when exactly Massent married Martina I never quite understood ; I believe they met somewhere in Switzerland one winter, but I didn't know he was so much as engaged when I dropped in, at his invitation, one evening to coffee and a chat—the first of our chats over the hospital scheme, or rather the 'brown room' scheme, as it then was. That was Martina's name for it.

It was a chilly evening in early spring, I remember ; there wasn't a leaf on the trees in the Square, and the wind came round the corner in short, irritable, backward lashes, as though someone had shouted, Whip behind ! It made Massent's cosy library all the cosier to hear the rain tingling on the panes behind the dark crimson curtains, snugly drawn ; and the firelight glanced pleasantly along the gilt titles of the books on his shelves.

We might have been talking together about an hour when we heard a knock at the hall-door ; a knock on that polished brass knocker which only his intimate friends, and the postman, ever disturbed. He raised his eyebrows involuntarily.

'I'm not expecting anyone,' he observed in a tone of quiet dismissal, and signalled his resumed attention to the point I had been making. But just then the maid entered.

'Please, sir, there's a man outside wants to speak to you.'

'A man ?' said Massent, slowly turning round. She might have said something—well, indecorous.

'You've shut the door, I suppose,' he added, seeing she still hesitated. 'He's outside the door ?'

'No, sir, I—'

What she would have said by way of excuse I don't know, for she was luckily interrupted by someone's saying quite clear and loud, 'Why, how wet you are ! Come in. There's a fire in the library,' and there was Mrs. Massent already in the room.

The maid had disappeared, but there was another figure under the lamp in the hall, a tall man with the wet shining on his shoulders—

so much I could see from where I sat. The shadow cast downwards from his thick brown hair prevented my seeing his face until, at a gesture, he followed Mrs. Massent into the library.

'This gentleman wants to speak to you, Harold,' she began; but Massent, who had risen by this time, interrupted her.

'I don't think you've met Mr. Locketer, Martina—Mr. Locketer, my wife.'

I bowed. She just nodded. 'That'll wait,' would describe the expression of her eyes as they glanced at and past me; clearly she didn't mean to leave the newcomer out in the cold.

'Quite soaking, I declare!' she cried in a vexed tone, and pushed him—literally pushed him—down into a chair by the fire—my chair.

Massent said something I didn't catch. The truth is, the talk for the next few minutes passed clean over me. I was wondering what exactly had attracted him; why he had married her. . . .

A confused notion that, whatever the reason, he had done uncommonly well for himself; and that her chestnut red hair and oval face with its delicate chin and sensitive nostrils would have taken Rossetti off his feet, was suddenly swept aside by hearing her exclaim, incredulously:

'But Harold, it's your own idea!—You had Mr. Locketer here to talk over this very thing. How can you pretend to have forgotten it?'

She had crossed the hearthrug and was standing beside him where he hung over a little oak table with whisky and cigars on it; he was fumbling with the syphon. Between the spasmodic rush and gurgle of the soda water I heard such disconnected phrases as: 'Private conversation' . . . 'perfectly' . . . 'treated like' . . . 'even know his name' . . .

'Oh, no,' said Mrs. Massent, as though struck by the singularity of the omission, and turning round with a little laugh: 'What is your name?—I never asked you.'

'Derwent—Philip Derwent,' he mumbled, with an ungainly jerk forward in his chair. I saw then that he had a sort of portfolio between his knees.

There was a moment's silence, an awkwardness which might possibly have become tension, had not my memory luckily responded to the sound of his name.

'Surely I have heard of you.' I came out with the words at haphazard. 'Derwent—why, it was you who came to me with an introduction once . . . some years ago . . . I forgot. . . .'

He faced round swiftly ; and with the action, at once challenging and sensitive, I recollect ed the episode perfectly. Our former interview had ended somewhat tragically in his fainting away on my studio floor. He had been on the verge of starvation.

'Yes,' he replied thoughtfully, and after an almost imperceptible pause. 'You gave me the beef-steak you had cooked for yourself—and there was a cast of the Pourtales Venus on a bracket near the window. . . . I'm glad to acknowledge your kindness.'

The chivalrous indiscretion quite took away my breath, but Mrs. Massent laughed in sheer triumphant pleasure.

'There, Harold, I was sure of it !' she cried, evidently answering the doubts he had hinted over the tumblers ; and without waiting for her husband's rejoinder, added : ' You're just the man to help us over our plan, isn't he, Mr. Locketer ?—the brown room, I mean.'

I repeated stupidly, 'The brown room ?'

'Yes, of course it must be brown ; that's how I see it. A long hall with open rafters in the roof, all brown and warm. And a great fire at each end, where they can huddle down. . . . And then, your pictures, you know,' she ended somewhat lamely. I saw that in this project of Massent's for a sort of guest-house, or refuge, where destitute, shivering mortals could betake themselves for warmth and shelter, the series of frescoes I had suggested occupied a very insignificant place. As she saw it, I mean.

But Derwent's eyes shone.

'By Jove, that's great !' he exclaimed, shooting out his long legs and leaning back in his chair. 'By pictures you mean panels, I take it,' he said, with a queer sort of reproving smile at Mrs. Massent—'panels, of course, let into the brown wainscot.' He had visualised the thing instantly.

'He called them frescoes,' Martina replied in a defensive tone, and appealed to her husband. ' Didn't he, Harold ? But, as Mr. Derwent says, they ought to be panels.'

Massent coughed. This fellow who had knocked unbidden on his brass knocker, you understand. . . .

'But it was hardly for this, I imagine,' he began in a slightly drawling voice. ' You came here for some particular purpose—yes ?'

'Oh, I forgot,' stammered Derwent, and commenced tugging at the thick, frayed string with which the portfolio was tied. 'I thought you might like to buy it,' he blurted out as he wrench'd the thing open at length, and half threw his treasure at us.

It was a copy of the papal group in Raphael's 'Heliodorus'—a superb rendering—or rather 'impression' I should say, for I have an idea it was done from memory. Massent's eyes glistened. He was a man of taste, remember.

After that there was a lot of desultory talk, Massent joining in with a kind of guarded friendliness, as though divided between the collector's instinct for a bargain and the gentleman's instinct not to let himself down.

Derwent, it seems to me now, behaved throughout admirably. Rid of the incubus of the detestable portfolio, he lay back in his chair again, with an audible sigh, and I believe never gave the business another thought until he left, although upon the price he might have got (and did) his very lodging for that night possibly depended.

. . . Ah!—true, I haven't described him. You must forgive these masculine omissions, Mrs. Erling; and probably you dear ladies are right in requiring to know what we look like, before you'll listen to what we've done. For the cast of a man's features is often enough the image of his fate, and there are idler conjectures than Samuel's.

I have already told you the colour of his hair, which was dark brown and very thick; his eyes were brown too, and rather sad, especially when he smiled. But the lines about his mouth were deeply incised—strong, even to hardness. You've seen portraits of the young nobles of Bellini's time, haven't you? He had that look; something visionary, and yet, well, cruel's the only word. A face out of the Middle Ages, you would say; and Massent, sitting opposite to him in the twilight, appeared curiously modern—new, by contrast. New and highly polished.

As the hour drew on Massent quite lost that note of a slightly puzzled patronage which had at first been so amusingly evident, and at length came out with the details of his refuge scheme, Martina only putting in a word now and then. It would cost a good deal, of course, he said, but then . . . Those poor fellows, women too, almost at his very office door; it made him shudder. Some place to warm themselves and rest. Mr. Derwent would understand.

'Oh, perfectly,' replied Derwent, with a grim chuckle. 'I've got a doss many a time at an Army shelter—very decent places too.'

Massent smiled good humouredly and looked sideways at his wife, who had slipped into a low chair a little out of the ring of light.

'To be sure. But this will make its appeal to—I won't say the aesthetic side of their nature, for I don't want to seem high-flown. But pictures of some sort, whether in frescoes, as Mr. Locketer suggested—'

'After all, I'd advise you to stick to the fires,' interposed Derwent, with a quick shake of the head; 'they won't thank you for much else.'

'Why not?' asked Martina quietly, from her place in the shadow.

Derwent frowned. 'When you're cold——' he began; but she surprised us all by insisting:

'You said yourself there ought to be panels in the wainscot.'

'If so, you led me to the idea,' he retorted. 'When you're freezing cold and down on your luck——'

'Well, so was Cordelia. Say, when you're tired too, like Julia, or yearning for comfort as Helena was. Find your subjects in Shakespeare's women; a doss-house will be none the worse for them.'

For a full minute, I should suppose, perhaps more, no one spoke a word. As for Derwent, he sat simply staring before him. I had to leave about that time, and so rather hurriedly began to make my excuses. But when he saw me on my feet Derwent suddenly jumped up too, and laying a friendly hand on my shoulder exclaimed:

'Well, good night, Mr. Locketer; you know your way down, eh? I've got to knock off a sketch or two before I turn in.'

He'd completely forgotten where he was. . . .

Well, it might have been three or four months later—I've no memory for dates—that I met him again. At the Massents', of course, but this time at dinner. I was astonished at the improvement in Derwent's appearance, and I'm not convinced even yet that his dress suit was borrowed.

Before I'd been in the room five minutes it was abundantly clear that he was the lion of the evening. About a dozen other guests were there, besides Derwent and myself—Procter amongst them, of whom you've heard, Poole, the scientist, and some nice women. Still, about half of them were strangers to me, though they all knew Derwent. I couldn't help grinning. Three months ago he hadn't a brim to his hat, you might say, and here he was dress-coated and boot-varnished, holding his own with old Procter over the text of the First Folio!

Bless Heaven, you don't know what it is to be sixty-five, Mrs. Erling, nor yet fifty-five, as I was then. You may reckon your years in complacence until you're fifty—but after that Nature counts for you, and sums it false every time. . . . No sugar, thank you. . . . Now, Derwent was thirty at the most ; he had beautiful brown hair, and he was practically assured of the commission to decorate Massent's glorified doss-house, which I had foolishly hoped would be mine. I took my revenge on the burgundy.

I think it was while the entrée was passing round that Derwent asked Procter, across the table, who *Vllorxa* was. Do you know the word, madam ? It comes in ‘Timon of Athens,’ in the third act. No one knows what it means, nor how it got there ; but there, for the confusion of critics, it is ; and old Procter slowly laid down his fork.

‘Not a character at all,’ he replied with that preliminary sniff which his adversaries say is short for Beware my European reputation. ‘A mere printer’s error. How it crept into the text no one knows.’

‘Poor thing !’ murmured Martina. ‘What a lonely word—and not a critic to give it countenance !’

Lightly as she spoke these words, they yet set me wondering how far they might have been prompted by her own experience. Indeed, it had often struck me how she had, as it were, crept into her present high position, no one knew precisely how. Perhaps she, too, was lonely, poor thing ! surrounded though she was by people of importance and attended by every circumstance of luxury. Amidst

‘Lucius, Lucullus and Sempronius, all—’

might it be that *Vllorxa* held her place by reason of the merest error—the error of a hasty courtship, an imprudent marriage ? Such was my fancy at the time, at least, though I don’t think now they were unhappy together. In character and the attitude of their minds, they were, no doubt, widely dissimilar ; she, so alert and delicately poised ; he, sedate and *selective*—you’ll appreciate the quality I find it difficult to express. But they met on common ground (and this is what I failed at the time to understand) in a genuine sympathy with every sort of misfortune.

You’ll remember how, at the Academy some eight or nine years back, the general talk was of a certain wonderful picture that had been turned down by the Hanging Committee ; well, that was a piece

of Derwent's work, done soon after this evening I've been describing. Many people thought it was going to introduce a new era in art, and there was considerable speculation over his next work. But as a matter of fact he never attempted the R.A. again, and pretty soon his name dropped out of currency.

And yet his best work had not been begun. It didn't begin until nearly a year later, when Massent was already growing cold about the original refuge scheme. He'd been consulting with various people in the interval, and there was a notion that it would lead to a lot of loafing, and possibly even become a centre of more serious trouble ; that was the police view of it, at any rate, and Massent was always very susceptible on a point of order. Poole, who saw them oftener than I did, told me that Martina was very disappointed, and oddly enough seemed inclined to blame Derwent. If he hadn't hung about so long with his designs, she said, the thing would have been well in hand by that time.

In fact her interest in Derwent fell off considerably, and I couldn't help being amused when I met the Massents out somewhere, a few months afterwards, to notice that it was rather Sir Harold than she who was his champion. I know he helped him financially from what Derwent has let drop, and even when he definitely decided to build the hospital, he still intended that Derwent should decorate the board room.

But one evening, pretty late, as I was sitting in my studio, nothing further from my mind than my rather disappointing young friend, who should walk in but he ?

' Ah ! the Venus again, dear lady,' he exclaimed, his quick eye catching sight of it at once. ' We're only bunglers, after all,' and he threw aside the parcel he was carrying, to lift it lovingly down from its bracket by the window.

' How's Mrs. Massent ? ' I asked with intentional abruptness, as I bent forward to light my clay at the stove.

' Oh, I've been thinking about her,' he answered with a sort of eager shyness, and at once crossed the room to where I sat.

I grunted. ' You can't tell how she is by thinking about her.'

He was feeling the lines of the cast with his delicate bony fingers.

' It's curious she shouldn't have mentioned Perdita in her list,' he murmured, half to himself. ' She's rather like her . . . well, all those flowers, you know,' he ended oddly, by way of explanation.

I made no attempt to conceal the irritation I felt.

'All what flowers?—this is absurd, Derwent,' I retorted sharply. 'And besides, that plan's dismissed altogether; there won't be any Perditas or Juliets, nor any fantastic mumpers' hall to give them shelter in either. Even Mrs. Massent sees that.'

I confess I was a brute, but then I thought him a coxcomb, and I dragged Martina across his path of set purpose to make him wince. But I was disappointed; his first words showed me that my thrust had left him untouched.

'Ah, I thought somehow she'd changed her mind; I ought to have called there more often than I have. . . . But then, you understand,' he broke off, with one of his sad smiles, 'I'm not a society man. But Massent—I'm rather surprised he's let her lead him. He's been uncommonly kind to me, too.'

I was frankly puzzled by this speech, the honesty of which was transparent. And for some reason I couldn't account for, what chiefly puzzled me was, that he evidently held Martina responsible for the suppression of the refuge scheme.

'So that's all up?' he inquired, looking up from the divan on which he was now sprawling. Still studying him, I merely nodded in reply.

'A pity, but it can't be helped now,' he growled as he rolled slowly into a more comfortable position. 'I'd brought the first sketch for you to see.'

Have you ever picked up a book, Mrs. Erling, or struck a chord on the piano, suddenly to find, like Aladdin, that you're in possession of a strange, unlooked-for power? For the moment you think yourself master of the world—there's nothing you couldn't do if you tried. That's how religions are born, I think. . . . Well, some such magical experience was mine when I opened Derwent's sketch-book. My mind took in a new sense of power that positively shook me with its intensity. I saw Perdita as he had drawn her, in that amazing deep-bitten, cross-hatch style he used in his cartoons; I saw her as Shakespeare created her. Madam, I *was* Shakespeare while I looked. . . .

At last I found words.

'Oh, it's perfectly monstrous,' I cried; 'Massent will have to recant. This settles it, once for all.'

I was on my feet by this time, and I believe I was gesticulating in a ridiculous fashion, for I saw Derwent smiling; and that I imagine is what changed the current of my thoughts.

'But when did you get Mrs. Massent to sit to you?' I asked, coming to a stand in front of the divan.

'Mrs. Massent ?' he repeated ; and then, with a snap of anger, 'that's not in the least like her.'

'But . . . all those flowers,' I stammered weakly.

Now that was the second curious thing that had happened that night. For no sooner had I spoken than I found I had absolutely repeated Derwent's own words of only a quarter of an hour ago—and with not a tittle more justification. For neither did his sketch of Perdita in any way resemble Martina, nor, on the other hand, had I ever observed Martina to be more than ordinarily fond of flowers. I mean I had never associated the idea of her with flowers as one does some girls. And yet, there it was ; both he and I had used this very identical phrase with regard to her, as explaining her, as a kind of spiritual link between her and Derwent's masterly conception of Perdita. Strange, wasn't it ? And at the time when I tried to account for it, I couldn't. My whole train of thought became confused, and I had a grotesque sense of having, as it were, swopped my identity with his, which made me stupidly cross and restless until Derwent went away, and I was able to be alone.

Massent's note, which came about three days later, I confess, caused me a certain cynical satisfaction. I was still suffering from an unpleasant feeling that I had in some inexplicable and rather uncanny fashion given myself away, and I hadn't read to the bottom of his first page before I found that Massent was equally annoyed with our genius, though for a very different reason. Derwent had been there, he said, with his sketch, which was certainly admirable, though not (and in this he was sure I would agree) suitable for the board room of a hospital, however well adapted to the original scheme. But Derwent simply wouldn't see it.

That was the gist of it : that Derwent was impossible. Unmannerly too, I guessed. Evidently he had said something which his patron had found it hard to pocket, for interspersed amongst the level, gentlemanly periods, there were little slippery patches where the going was by no means so sure. I chuckled grimly when I read the concluding sentence : 'After this—it ran—'I don't think I can do better than ask you to undertake the work. Will you, therefore, be good enough to call here to-morrow at 6 P.M.?' Amused at the neat estimate of my claims implied in that innocent *after this*, I scarcely noticed that the hour of the appointment had been altered from 6.30 by a quick, bold dash of the pen.

This explained itself, however, the moment I knocked at the well-remembered door, for the door was opened almost immediately, not by the maid, but by Mrs. Massent herself.

'Oh, come into the morning-room,' she said. 'Harold isn't home yet, but you won't mind waiting for him, I know.'

If I hadn't been fifty-five, Mrs. Erling, I might have been not unpleasantly disturbed to find myself the chosen object of all the apparatus of intrigue, but I swear I only grunted. 'So you tamper with your husband's letters, ma'am!' She didn't hear me, but led me quietly enough into a room which, I saw at once, was her pride and chosen refuge. It was a lovely autumn evening and the warm air came in through the open French windows from the terrace, across which the sun was casting its last rays. The lamps had not yet been lighted.

Directly I was seated Martina said, 'You're a friend of his, aren't you, Mr. Locketer?'

'Of Derwent's?' I supplied the name. 'Well, I know him pretty intimately.'

'You've seen his design for the panel—he told me so.'

I bowed, wondering what she was manoeuvring for.

She kept me waiting while she lit a couple of candles on the little inlaid table beside the sofa.

'And you think it——?'

'A masterpiece.'

'So does Harold,' she replied, looking me straight in the eyes.

I bowed again.

'What did he do it for?' she asked, never moving her eyes from my face.

I don't know why I answered as I did, but I simply said, 'It won't be used.'

If she felt any emotion she concealed it well. She slightly shook her head as she just murmured, 'It's me.'

'It isn't in the least like you,' I felt called upon to remonstrate stupidly.

'It's me. Harold didn't see it, of course. . . . What did he do it for?'

I threw out my hands. 'My dear Mrs. Massent, I don't know anything about this; and besides, your husband has very kindly offered me the decoration of——'

'The board room; I know. Mr. Derwent couldn't do *that*.'

Don't blame me if her manner stung me; and I rose to go. She seemed quite to have forgotten that I was there ostensibly at her husband's invitation.

'He could have had the job if he'd liked, I suppose,' I threw in, still inwardly raging.

'Mr. Derwent?' She recalled herself. 'Oh, why couldn't it still have been my brown room?' she cried. 'He understood that. He knew it was what I wanted. . . . He won't do anything now.'

'Oh, he's only at the beginning of his career,' I forced myself to say. 'He's famous already—I wish I had the chance of half the commissions he'll get.'

'Oh, I don't mean that. . . . He sees too much. People don't forgive that.'

'What happened to his sketch?' I asked, to put an end to the conversation, and moving towards the door.

For the first time she showed nervousness, and her voice trembled as she replied hurriedly, 'Oh, that was the chief cause. . . . Harold wanted to pay him for it, and he laughed. . . . I tore it up at last.'

'*You—you couldn't!*' I exclaimed incredulously, but she merely turned to blow out the two candles, and let me go without another word.

It was Poole who told me about Massent's visit to Derwent's studio; he had a sort of attic with a big skylight, somewhere near the King's Road. A pitiful story, hardly redeemed even by that immortal caricature of Massent as Malvolio, which the beggar threw off the moment his guest had left—Malvolio in yellow stockings and a white hat! It's scandalously funny. . . . I ought never to have bought it.

And it wasn't even like him; that's the amazing part! No more than the Perdita resembled Martina. But that was precisely the quality of Derwent's genius. He never *reproduced*—he interpreted. To apply a simile which old Procter, I think, used once in speaking about him: his art held the same relation to life as a Greek choral ode did to the action of the play. And that, I have come to understand, is why I saw Martina, not in the actual portrait of Perdita, but in the substituted figure of a flower. . . .

Yes, a pitiful story indeed; for not only would Derwent take not a penny for the sketch, but he even held an impromptu auction of all his stuff in order to repay the money he had already received—and that was no light sum, believe me—from Massent. Naturally the breach between them was complete, and it never entered my head that their two names could ever be coupled again.

But I was wrong; and, as before, it was Poole who brought me news of poor Derwent—poor in every way now, for he seemed deliberately to have set himself to alienate all his old friends, and was quite without resources.

'I called to see him yesterday,' said Poole, always a man of

quick sympathies, as you know ; ‘ but I found I had been fore stalled by Mrs. Massent. How she had discovered his garret I can’t think. But there she was, and I—well, I didn’t make a long stay. I’d meant to ask him to paint my little girl, but somehow, you know. one hesitates. . . . I’m sorry though.’

Forgive an old gossip-monger if, having no daughter to be contaminated by Bohemianism, I felt foolishly inclined to step in where a scientist feared to tread. There was no longer any question of rivalry between us ; I had been definitely appointed as Massent’s adviser on all matters of art, such as they were, at the new hospital. Everybody knew Derwent for the abler man, but he wasn’t the man for that job, certainly.

Rather to my surprise I found Derwent at work on a tiny wax statuette, while Mrs. Massent, her hat laid aside, was sitting on a sort of low settle under the slanting skylight. She looked up radiantly when I knocked on the half-open door, but Derwent went on with his work.

‘ Why, how long is it since we met, Mr. Locketer ? ’ she cried, holding out her hand for me to take, but not rising.

‘ Seven months to the day,’ I replied. ‘ That was September and this is April ; you blew out your two candles on the 17th at 6.25 P.M., and it’s the 17th to-day.’

‘ Well remembered ! ’ She clapped her hands, and I could see she was in bounding spirits. ‘ You won’t guess what that is,’ she said presently, nodding her head towards the unfinished statuette.

I walked over towards it. It represented a slight boyish nude bending all his force to break a golden hoop—a crown, I supposed—across his upraised knee. I shook my head, and Martina went off into a peal of laughter. ‘ It’s *Success*,’ she said. ‘ You see, he’s breaking the crown which he had won the right to wear. He’s gained success even over success.’

‘ Physically it isn’t easy to break a golden ring,’ I said with deliberate intention. ‘ Have you ever tried ? ’

‘ Tell him what we’re going to do, Philip,’ she cried, ignoring my remark ; but he only replied by a quick ‘ Don’t talk.’ And Martina looked from him to me with a little jerk of her Rossetti-gold head that meant ‘ You know him—he hasn’t changed ! ’

‘ We’re going to turn *this*,’ and she swept her arm triumphantly round the almost dismantled studio, ‘ into a real brown room—you remember ? Philip is doing the “ Success ” for the bracket over there, and there’ll be a warm carpet and brown rafters—I’m seeing to that ; and the fireplace—’

'And the guests—the poor—are they still part of the scheme?' I asked, honestly wanting to know.

'No,' replied Martina, gently sliding her hand behind her head and leaning back among the paint-dabbled cushions. 'No, they'll have to go. We can't bring them back.' I thought she wasn't going to say any more, but presently, with a swift look almost of challenge, she added 'It's for *him*.'

And within three months the change was actually effected. The brown room was realised, and in it Derwent worked all day at those marvellous sketches, busts and panels, of which so few unfortunately remain. Martina was there, with him, almost every day. Her spirit has been translated into how many forms of beauty! and to tell of her quick intelligence and sympathy is just to name his masterpieces, one by one.

You are a discerner of mysteries, madam! No, he didn't know. He was at the City all day, as I think I mentioned, and their friendship had continued for half a year before the inevitable disclosure. I was present when he walked in, unannounced.

I'm glad to have forgotten most of what was said, but he charged them both, in his cold, gentlemanly manner, with some things which were not true. They were not true.

One incident, I remember, however, very well; how after Massent had said his say, Derwent went quietly across to his statuette, and, easily removing the plain golden hoop from the waxen hands, slid it over his own fourth finger. Massent didn't observe the action, but Martina did, and I heard a long-drawn sigh which might have been of pain, or joy, or both. . . .

The end came soon after this, and the night Derwent died, Martina burnt all his unfinished sketches in the studio stove which he had had lighted on purpose. She burnt the little wax statuette, meaningless now without its crown; but he died with the ring on his finger.

I suppose Massent had grounds enough in reason, as he certainly had in law, to do as he did. But I hardly expected he would have married again.

Martina hovered about Chelsea for a while, but eventually disappeared. Poole was awfully cut up about the thing, and in fact whenever we meet his first question is after Martina—or *Vllorxa*, as he calls her, you understand—name deleted by consent from the modern text.

What we cannot explain we eliminate.

ARTHUR F. WALLIS.

## PAINTINGS AND PARCHMENTS.

BY LT.-GENERAL SIR GEORGE MACMUNN, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O.

‘All these were honoured in their generations and were the glory of their times.’—*Eccl.*

### I. PICTURES.

Two or three years ago I was privileged to take those who cared to accompany me, on a mission of high trespass into a great-aunt’s inlaid Indian workbox, and there amid its scented panels draw out old secrets and treasures, that struck old broken strings to melody. It stood on an inlaid backgammon table in the bow window on the curved front of a Georgian house, in a south coast watering place, whence we watched a North Sea schooner curtseying low to the Channel gale. But we never looked into the drawing-room to which the bow window belonged, because the trespass in the workbox held our interest for as long as is good at one séance. Nevertheless that room had treasures all its own, two rooms in one, with the folding doors removed, and well worth a visit if great-aunt will show us round. It is a treasure house of the older water-colour world, in which Paul Sandby and Jno. Cozens rather sneer at such young things as Prout and Copley Fielding.

Before we begin on the water-colours we might glance at the setting of the room. The rule is to begin by the vieux rose tapestry hangings that came from Warren Hastings’ house at Dalesford, from the house of the ‘blessed Mr. Hastings,’ as he was called in the family. Two Louis Quinze chairs stood against the wall, upholstered in crimson velvet, and between them a Chippendale card table.

‘Great Aunt, what is the story of those chairs?’

‘Ah, those belonged to old Tom Mathias, the Italian scholar and poet, who was an uncle of your great-great-grandfather Gabriel. You will see all about him in the “Dictionary of National Biography”; he lived at Rome, and was a friend of the Young Pretender and Cardinal York. Everybody knew him in those days. And look, before we come to the Cozens, I want you to look at this oval crayon drawing. That, my dear, is a drawing by Zoffany of himself, which he did for old Gabriel.’

It was a striking picture of a face looking pensive at you, with dark, speaking eyes that seemed to gaze into yours, with his thumb and fingers round his throat, and a crayon in a holder between his thumb and forefinger. Great aunt goes on—

'Old Gabriel Mathias, you know, was Privy Purse to Queen Charlotte, and presently I will show you a note to him from the old Queen. He first met Zoffany when painting in Italy. You will find him mentioned in the Faringdon Diary, as having studied long in Italy; in fact he himself exhibited several times in the Academy. When Zoffany was at Strand-on-the-Green, Gabriel had a house in Richmond. In fact Zoffany actually did a portrait of him in oils; you will remember it used to be in your grandfather's dining-room, with the bust of his father beside him. The picture is referred to in Professor Williamson's book. Perhaps you know the picture of the Italian woman with the coffee-pot that is downstairs; that is one of Gabriel's, and the sponge cakes on the table by the coffee-pot. Those are the best cakes I have ever seen, and I always want to eat one when I look at the picture. Now come and let us look at the water-colours.'

So much for the Zoffany interest, which was very intriguing, for that artist seemed to be speaking to you in the crayon drawing.

'Those five are the sketches by John Cozens; all but one, I think, are in Italy, and they are all in that bluey-brown he loved to work in or else that cobalt and neutral tint. That one on the shores of a lake is his more usual style, but I like the one of the old church on the mountain side. You only see that belfry arch and that shaped bell in Italy, with the grass growing on the roof, which used to be so characteristic, as I remember it, happy and peaceful enough. I always think I can hear the Angelus coming across the valley. Yes, that distant bluey scrub in the smaller one is very attractive; your mother always liked that one of the Plains of Marathon. What is the date? You will see it under the signature; most of them about 1780. The two naval fights are by Dominic Serres, 1781, I think. He was an R.A. and specialised in sea fights. The top one is the *Flora* engaging *La Nymphe*, and the lower is *La Nymphe* striking to the *Flora*.

'Those two in the black and gold frames are Paul Sandby's, both of scenes of the camps in Hyde Park during the American War of Independence. I think they are dated 1784, and I have heard that His Majesty has the rest of the set in Buckingham Palace. I expect Gabriel got these when he was Privy Purse. That over

there is a village scene, also by Sandby, and is signed too, but is nothing like such good work.

'The study of a tree, slightly tinted, is by John Alexander Gresse, who lived between 1741 and 1794; I think that one is dated 1781. He was a famous drawing-master, and as you see that is a picture study rather than a picture. The picture near the cabinet is another Cozens, the Appian Way, near Ronca, and Papa, and those two pencil sketches which are so highly finished are by Da Costa. I always like those beautiful old finished pencil works, when the pencilling itself gives the values and even shows you the colours. Now we come to a later generation. Your grandmother studied under these. Those four are Wichelos, but I forget which, for there were several of them; James I., I think. They are remarkable for the body colour, and those of the glades are wonderful for scenery in the Shires. That moonlight one is a Wichelo also. That half-finished sketch is by Copley Fielding; it is not signed, but it says on the back in your grandmother's writing that it is by him. That old house is by Wichelo, and is your great-uncle's house on Putney Hill, long ago pulled down. The sketch with the wagon and horses is by De Wint. That is all of any great interest in the water-colours, and those two of Paul Sandby's are supposed to be the best. This old book has some studies by Prout, but I don't know which of the Prouts—not Sam, I know. I think they were just to show your grandmother how to use light and shade.'

And that, it is true, finished the pictures; but with great-aunt in her showman's mood, we could not let her off there. So we turn to the miniatures.

'Please tell us about the miniatures.'

'Oh, you must remember them. I have often told you about them before you went off to India. The top one is an Engleheart, and is your great-great-aunt, the beautiful Miss Blunt who married the Baron Imhoff, Warren Hastings' stepson; she was also your mother's god-mother, and that old paste tiara was hers, and I think came from Mrs. Warren Hastings, her mother-in-law. The one below is also an Engleheart, and is one of her sisters. There is a Cosway there too, but I forget who it is; but you will find the name on the back. That small one is General Watson, who carried King William's Standard at the Boyne Water, and is by Nathaniel Hone. The standard he carried still exists and used to be borne in Orange processions in Belfast in front of Lord Carson. Now you had better look at the 'shades.' The top one is your great-uncle in

the 33rd Bengal Native Infantry, who died of cholera near Jelalabad, in the First Afghan War. We heard afterwards that the Afghans dug up his body and hung it on a mulberry tree. General Pollock sent it down to Peshawur to be buried.' And such like and so forth through all the lesser story of the Empire, soldier and sailor, including the chessboard with which a younger Gabriel had played chess with Napoleon at Elba. For the story of the originals of the 'shades'—the old word for what we nowadays call silhouettes—is just the story of those families who used to furnish the rank and file officers of the Army and Navy. On a shelf below the naval pictures of Dominic Serres stood a cut-glass decanter, with the badge of the Madras Artillery, and the silver base of a hookah, which, monogrammed, might have belonged to William Hickey or, better still, to his scandalous crony Bob Pott. You don't often see such in these days, but I found one, also with a monogram, in a *kabari's* shop in the Lower Mall at Simla, a place where it always pays to be inquisitive and keep your eyes open.

## II. THE PARCHMENTS.

When we dived into those scented sandal-wood recesses of the workbox we found many fascinating old scraps that told of life round the Empire in the Napoleonic days, and when King George and George Washington 'argued the point.' Now, when we had finished the pictures, great-aunt said—

' You must amuse yourself for half an hour. I don't think you ever saw your grandfather's scrap book, I only found it last year ; and I know you are a Freemason, and there are one or two Masonic things of his. I will give you the silver Mason's badge in the glass silver table over there if you like.'

Now those old Masonic papers were very interesting, and it would be delightful if I could explain to all and sundry exactly what they did mean, but that cannot be. However, there was so much among them that can be talked of, and which are of entrancing interest, in this strange history of the world, that I will explain as much as I dare. I should not like to be found at the cross roads a corpse with the seal of David on my forehead or whatever other penalty the world believes to hang over the indiscreet Freemason.

The silver badge I eagerly extracted from the cabinet. It is not what you would see now, nor indeed do I know what purpose it served, whether one of those badges of honour of an ancient

type, or whether a watch-chain charm of large size, ornaments which are now very properly considered out of place in so prominent a position, unduly proclaiming membership to all and sundry. But it was a thin silver plate with the ornaments of the Craft : square and compass, moon and stars, pillars and candlesticks, the Volume of the Sacred Law, and a catenarian arch. In fact of a quaintness that made it specially valuable.

Then came a most delightful thing which I will give in full, no less than a certificate of good standing and an appeal to brethren round the world to stand by the bearer in time of trouble. My own lodge gave me something similar when the War broke out, in several languages, praying enemy Freemasons that they ' wadna ding their bagonets ' into me, or words to that effect. It is perhaps a reflection on how the Craft has not yet saved the world, that the Germans from Frederick the Great onwards have been enthusiastic Masons. This certificate is from one of the ' marching lodges ' of which but few remain, which were granted to regiments of the Army alone. It is from the Regimental Lodge of the Royal Regiment, and is dated at Musselburgh Barracks in 1815, and this is how it ran :

Fiat Lux et Fuit.

' We the Master Wardens Treasurer and Secretary of the Royal Thistle Lodge No. 289 held in the 4th Battalion Royal Scots, hereby certify that our faithful Brother George Mathias was regularly entered an apprentice passed the Fellow Craft and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in the said Lodge, and as such initiated in the friendly and mysterious ceremonies thereto belonging. In testimony whereof we have delivered these presents and recommend him to all regular Lodges round the Globe.

Given under our hands and seal  
of the said Lodge this twentythird  
day of May in the year of Our Lord  
1815, and of Light 5815.

GEL GALBRAITH Mas<sup>r</sup>  
JNO ROBERTSON S. W.  
BENJ. BOVILL Junr W<sup>n</sup>

GEO FLUKES Treas<sup>r</sup>  
JOHN W. GOWAN Secy'

All duly sealed with a seal and azure ribbon, just before the recipient hurried off to join his battalion on the frontier of Canada and the

United States. In the workbox was, I remember, another letter, which I did not then refer to, in which Ensign Mathias writes to his sister a year or so earlier that he and another lad had discovered all the secret words of the Freemasons, which still stand out in a pinny half-formed hand, for all the world to see, a hundred and twelve years later, to the scandal of orthodox Masons. Evidently the lad joined the Craft a few months later.

At the end of the scrap book, two MS. sheets had been gummed in, which proved to be notes on one of the most entrancing subjects, viz. the real use of the 'Ineffable Name' or *Shem Hameforash*, to use its Hebrew name, and also some remarks about the *Baal Shem* or 'Masters of the Name.' I knew enough of the subject to see that we were touching a subject full of mediaeval legend and with which the whole story of 'white' or benevolent magic was mixed up. The note itself is too long and the subject too deep to write much of. Briefly, for those who know nothing of it, it may be said that in the Jewish religion only the High Priest in the Holy of Holies might pronounce the Name of God. If met with in the scriptures a reader would say *Adonai*, which used the same vowel points, or the word *Hashem*. The real letters were scattered and never to be united till the restoration of Israel to Palestine. Those who belong to the Holy Royal Arch of Jerusalem will understand something of this, and still more those who have attained to the princely Masonic Orders.

This phrase *Shem Hameforash* refers to the real name and not to any paraphrase, and is best translated 'The name of accurate expression.' Certain of the Cabalists in the Middle Ages who knew how to give the real pronunciation as it was pronounced in the Inner Temple were believed to have miraculous powers. The Rabbis now say that the real way to say it is lost. A legend says that Jesus of Nazareth obtained access by stealth to the Inner Temple and then copied the *Shem Hameforash* on a piece of paper which He concealed in an incision in His leg, and thereby worked miracles. In Jewish folk-lore it plays the part of a talisman. The 'Masters of the Name' survived till quite modern times in Jewish Poland. In the Kabbala the legend expands enormously, and 'The Word of Power' is like unto that which now and again is said to have echoed down the great hall in the Temple of Karnak. Some commentators believe that it was the use of the 'Word of Power' that produced the unexplained effect on the officers and servants of the High Priest as described in the eighteenth chapter

of St. John. Also that the explanation of the 114th Psalm, verse 3, is the same, it being supposed that the *Tetragrammaton* was inscribed on Aaron's rod or Moses' staff.

It was all remarkable, and when great-aunt returned I asked her, 'Have you read these notes on Hebrew names ?'

'No,' she said, 'no. But your grandfather was very interested in Hebrew things and so were all the older Mathiases ; you see there is the Jewish name, and Gabriel's father adopted the dice box as his crest, and armorial bearings with dice, and the motto '*Jacta est alea.*'

'Why did he do that ?'

'Because "the lot fell on Matthias," of course ; but we only use one "t."'

'What a queer business !' was all I could find to remark, and so it was.

'Now,' said great-aunt, 'come along down to tea, and you can envy the sponge cakes in the picture as you did when you were a child, if you don't like those Ellen has made ; but here are two or three old letters I found lately and kept for you. They are between your grandfather and his father, and I thought you would like them, and they are about military matters.'

There was nothing wrong with Ellen's sponge cakes, but the ones in the picture did look good, a shade better than even Ellen's, and it was not till later that I looked at the letters. They are such natural, simple letters, though 114 years old, that I will give extracts from them.

The first is from Captain J. V. Mathias, late of the 6th Foot and 62nd Regiment, to his son Ensign George Mathias of the Royal Regiment at Musselburgh Barracks, Edinburgh :

‘STANHOE HALL,  
‘NORFOLK,  
‘Jany. 20th 1814.

‘MY DEAR GEORGE

‘We only received your letter of the 9th Instant this morning owing no doubt to the great fall of snow that has lately blocked the roads, and perhaps more so in the North. However here it is at last. From the accounts that lately appeared in the newspapers I was prepared to receive the hint about your going to the Peninsula, as all the disposable force is to join Lord Wellington. Well my boy, I know you will do your duty out there as all your countrymen have done before you. Recollect your life is in the hands of a gracious Providence and look up to his protection in the day of

battle, whose omnipotent will we must all obey, and who watches over us in the hour of danger. You cannot go at a better time on service than in bodily health and strength. Do your duty my dear George, think on your King and country, which calls you to combat its enemies, and sustain the honour of your regiment, which has ever been a good disciplined one and fought bravely. So please God when you return you shall fight all your campaigns over again, round your fire side, and your little brothers with their ears and mouths wide open, will swallow all you please *to add*. . . . Your mother desires me to add that you should provide yourself immediately with flannel waistcoats to wear under your shirts. . . .

And so forth, with the family news, and information as to how to meet a gunner brother at Portsmouth.

Here is the letter from the Ensign, or the references that are of interest :

' Well, there is bad news from the 4th Battalion in Holland. I suppose you have seen in the paper we have had two captains and one lieutenant killed and one captain and three lieutenants severely wounded. It was at the storming of Bergen-op-zoom. Sir P. Graham has made our two battalions bleed, for he commanded the division at San Sebastian, when The Royals had three hundred killed in twenty-five minutes and out of a fine grenadier company only one sergeant and two privates returned. All the officers were killed, and now he has played us the same trick in Holland. How sorry the Duke of Kent will be.'

Curiously enough old Gabriel, of the generation further back, has endorsed on the cover to James Vincent :

' Your son has been either thoughtless in sending this letter unsealed to me, or reposes much confidence in me. Altho' it reached me open, I pledge myself I have sealed it without looking at the contents. I have preferred sending it in a frank to passing it from my office.'

And that must be the end of it, Gabriel, James and George have long ago passed over, and perhaps it is hardly right to let their letters see the light, save only for the simple human touch that never changes. And let us say again with Ben Sirach :

' Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us . . . there be of them that have left a name behind, that their praises might be reported. And some there be who have no memorial : who are perished as though they had never been, and are become as though they never had been born.'

*SOME THACKERAY ORIGINALS.*

BY P. R. KRISHNASWAMI, M.A.

LECTURER IN ENGLISH, GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, KUMBAKONAM  
(SOUTH INDIA).

## IV.

*THE REV. CHARLES HONEYMAN.*

THE Reverend Charles Honeyman is of the numerous class of unclerical clergymen who have so often attracted the satiric pen of the British novelist. Thackeray introduces him in an early chapter of the novel as the author of a letter in a flowery style, addressed to his brother-in-law and patron, Colonel Newcome. Honeyman has been languishing in an up-country curacy before securing a place in London. His letter to Colonel Newcome suggests the depressing effects of a solitude in Yorkshire or in a Lincolnshire fen. He has been a very attractive and popular priest, because, on his departure from Leatherhead, the congregation presents him with a rich silk cassock and a silver tea-pot with sovereigns in it. Once in London, Honeyman achieves a phenomenal reputation for his preaching, becoming a pet of Mayfair and a special favourite with the ladies of the aristocratic circles. His personal accomplishments, and his capacity for wit and convivial conversation, render him particularly welcome at social gatherings. Following new moves in the Church, perhaps, he wears a surplice for some time, when he scares away some of his patrons, and he piques himself on suffering for his faith. Honeyman is an epicurean, and fastidious in his dress and food. He is lazy, and has the frequent excuse of ill-health. He is addicted to wine, and through costly habits runs into debts which he cannot repay. His extravagance and the consequent troubles apparently serve to make a hypocrite and liar of him. The novelist redeems his character somewhat at the end of the story, when we learn that, after obtaining the chaplaincy of Boggleywallah, Honeyman begins to make remittances to repay his debts to the Colonel, and the Colonel is touched by this act of the brother-in-law.

There is perhaps an uncertain touch in the making of the Rev. Charles Honeyman. The marked homage which he receives on leaving Leatherhead can leave us in no doubt about his success

as a clergyman. Why should Thackeray mock at his legitimate ambition to become distinguished in the larger arena of London? It would be an ideal too high for earthly use to imply that ambition should never be for a clergyman. Honeyman's desire to go to London is only too well justified by his splendid success with the aristocratic society that gathered to hear him at Lady Whittlesea's Chapel. Later on, however, this success suffers a reaction. New creeds come in, and Honeyman's patrons desert him. His sermons grow stale, his capacity for originality being limited. London has, perhaps, made his life far more expensive than ever before, his circle of friends having increased considerably, and being composed chiefly of persons of the upper society. The pecuniary troubles of the London priest are drawn with no kindly touch. Frederick Bayham is permitted to describe him as an absolute humbug and liar. His debts accumulate fast, partly owing to his ignorance in dealing with tradesmen—even this trait draws no compassion from the novelist—and he goes to prison. The glorious part of the clergyman which won him the heartfelt homage of the people of Leatherhead, and roused the deepest emotional outpourings of the inhabitants of Mayfair, is ill blended with the despicable hypocrisy, gallantry and floweriness of expression, and the desperate falsehoods about his debts, which we are to see in Honeyman. The skeleton in Honeyman's cupboard is certainly announced with a great flourish, but it leaves the reader fairly unconvinced. There are far ghastlier skeletons in the cupboards of other characters in the novel before which Honeyman's should pale into insignificance. The suggestion is ventured here that the true explanation of the ill-pieced character of Honeyman is to be found in the discovery and close study of the original on which it is based.

Thackeray is not, like Trollope, a special painter of types of clergymen. Honeyman is perhaps the only London cleric that he has painted for us in his novels. Looking for living parallels to various details in this portrait, we may turn to one who was an intimate friend of Thackeray's. The Rev. W. H. Brookfield, the witty Canon, was one whom the novelist knew from his Cambridge days. He was born in 1809, and was two years older than Thackeray. He was ordained Curate of Maltby by the Bishop of Lincoln about 1834. He was afterwards at Southampton, and on leaving that place he was presented with a silver tea-pot, with a hundred sovereigns in it. Brookfield had been particularly sensitive to the vegetating life of country parts. When he secured a position in

London, he easily became a favourite of Mayfair and the object of marked partiality from the fair sex. His popularity in the highest circles was due to his personal accomplishments and charm. He was a thorough epicurean in his habits and showed a fastidious taste for food and a fondness for wine.

There are many striking details of correspondence between Honeyman and Brookfield. If Brookfield had been at Cambridge, Honeyman had been at Oxford. The novelist's usual trick of evading the detection of originals is illustrated in Thackeray's assigning of Honeyman to Oxford, and not to Cambridge. The Lincolnshire living held by Brookfield is certainly hinted at in Honeyman's letter occurring in chapter iii. of the novel. Brookfield's disgust with the stagnation of country life was certainly not less keen than Honeyman's. The following occurs in a letter written by Brookfield to George Lyttelton in 1836 :<sup>1</sup>

‘ Nothing changes in this most lithic spot. The inventive spirit of a *Times* reporter would fall into lethargy in five minutes from the dearth and drought of notabilia. I have on the very coat you last saw me in, my hair and nails grow not, the fiddle is still unstrung, the only string it had when you saw it will not vary the monotony by cracking. The lean Calvinist is still lean and still a Calvinist—the birds hop not—the fishes flop not—the kine crop not, and for me my mind is the callous unresisting victim of a painless but fatal chronic, and my wits lie all five huddled and stifled in a leathern elephantiasis of sloth—incapable and inaccessible. Oh, for one term of Cam. Oh, for one week at Trin. . . .’

Indeed, Brookfield's friends also commented with playful zest on Brookfield's preference of London to a country station. Lord Houghton, sending a note to him, writes : ‘ I direct this to Babylon, not knowing your address among the beasts of Lincolnshire.’

The parting homage paid to Brookfield at Southampton was exactly similar to what Honeyman received at Leatherhead. Of Honeyman we read :

‘ In one of his drawers is the rich silk cassock presented to him by his congregation at Leatherhead (when the young curate quitted

<sup>1</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 24. Most of the information about Brookfield in this paper is derived from the same work. It was, however, from the perusal of an article in the *London Mercury* for March, April, and May 1925, on ‘The Melancholy Humourist,’ by Lt.-Col. C. B. Thackeray, that the present writer first constructed the hypothesis of Brookfield suggesting Honeyman. Part of the information about Brookfield in this paper is derived from the article in the *London Mercury*.

that parish for London duty), and on his breakfast-table the silver tea-pot, once filled with sovereigns and presented by the same devotees.<sup>1</sup>

To turn to Brookfield :

'The departure of Mr. Brookfield from Southampton was marked by meetings, speeches, etc.; a silver tea-pot, one hundred guineas, and a set of robes were bestowed upon him, and he went away for many reasons regrettfully, regretted by many.'<sup>2</sup>

Brookfield's popularity in Mayfair was exactly like Honeyman's. Honeyman receives 'dear little confidential notes from sweet friends of his congregation. "O dear Mr. Honeyman," writes Blanche, "what a sermon that was! I cannot go to bed to-night without thanking you for it." "Do, do, dear Mr. Honeyman," writes Beatrice, "lend me that delightful sermon. And can you come and drink tea with me. . . ." Again, Honeyman's special attraction to the fair sex is hinted: 'The men come away from his sermons and say, "It's very pleasant, but I don't know what the deuce makes all you women crowd so to hear the man."'<sup>3</sup> Turning to Brookfield, we have on record that Lady Ashburton once remarked :

'Oh, Mrs. Brookfield, I hear all the fine ladies in London are rushing after your husband; they say he preaches more beautifully than anybody ever did before. Granville has been to hear him and took his Mother, and his Mother is charmed by it.'<sup>4</sup>

The attachment of the ladies to Honeyman was so great as to induce them to make special efforts to secure promotion for him in the Church :

'When the Dean of Plimlico has his illness, many people think Honeyman will have the Deanery; that he ought to have it, a hundred female voices vow and declare: though it is said that a reverend head at headquarters shakes dubiously when his name is mentioned for preferment.'<sup>5</sup>

We may note here that the ladies exhibited an exactly similar zeal on behalf of Brookfield, meeting with the same disappointment

<sup>1</sup> *The Newcomes*, p. 147 (The Oxford Thackeray).

<sup>2</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *The Newcomes*, pp. 147 and 148.

<sup>4</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 424.

<sup>5</sup> *The Newcomes*, p. 148.

that fell to Honeyman. Brookfield's promotion to a bishopric was prevented by Lord Shaftesbury regarding him as a freethinker, and his friends showed marked sympathy for him at this juncture :

' Miss Charlotte Williams Wynne, who had rejected three Dukes among her suitors, wrote to tell Brookfield that it was a far finer thing to remain "a *People's Preacher*" than to become the conventional, white handkerchiefed, wordy "Popular Preacher."<sup>1</sup>

The incident of Honeyman wearing a surplice for a brief period had its parallel in Brookfield doing the same. We read : ' . . . a little later he is found to be preaching in a "surplice," which practice however he was very soon persuaded to give up.'<sup>2</sup> Still another detail in this connexion may be traced between Honeyman and Brookfield. When Mrs. Hobson Newcome, shocked by Honeyman's surplice, walked away from Lady Whittlesea's Chapel, Honeyman presented a bewildered appearance.

' It was delightful to view him afterwards, and the airs of martyrdom which he assumed. Had they been going to tear him to pieces with wild beasts next day, he could scarcely have looked more meek, or resigned himself more pathetically to the persecutors.'<sup>3</sup>

We may look to a hint of this martyrdom in a letter written by Lady Ashburton to Brookfield, when the expectation of his being made a bishop was disappointed. She

' urged him not to injure his position "in the vain attempt to drive common sense into fashionable heads," and, when pressing him to come to the Grange, said "the cart for heretics shall meet you any time you like."<sup>4</sup>

Both Honeyman and Brookfield were men of social charm. When Lady Ann Maria begs her husband to speak to the Home Secretary to do something for Honeyman, the husband replies : ' We can ask him to dinner next Wednesday if you like. They say he's a pleasant fellow out of the wood.'<sup>5</sup> Of Brookfield's social charm there is abundant testimony. One of the striking things remarked of him was by Kinglake, who wrote : ' Men may rail against the Church,

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is from Lt.-Col. C. B. Thackeray's article. The letter of Miss C. W. Wynne will be found on p. 439 of *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*.

<sup>2</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> *The Newcomes*, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Lt.-Col. C. B. Thackeray quotes from *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 441.

<sup>5</sup> *The Newcomes*, p. 148.

but dear Brookfield at all events . . . was never in the least demoralised by taking Holy Orders.'<sup>1</sup>

Honeyman and Brookfield resemble each other again in their epicurean habits of life. Honeyman was a dainty feeder, and loved lobster and talk and wine. Wine was a chief cause of his ruin, caused by enormous debts. Brookfield's epicureanism was not less marked.

'The Canon was an epicure in the sense that he enjoyed to the full the good things of this life, good company, good living, good wines, pretty faces, laughter, and all that lends grace to living : he abhorred squalor and meanness, whether in external or spiritual things.'<sup>2</sup>

Brookfield was always in the habit of describing in detail the *menu* of every meal that he ate, whether at taverns or at friends' houses. An explanation of his own character which Brookfield offers in one of his letters is of interest in this connexion :

' . . . though you may think me Sly I am no such thing, though you think I like Champagne and Court ladies and palaces and arch mitres, it is all a mistake—these just happening to fall into my lap. I like none of them, and only use them for the extension of religion. . . . '<sup>3</sup>

Honeyman's fastidiousness in dress was equally matched by Brookfield's. Stephen Spring Rice, writing to Brookfield, apostrophises him thus : ' You starched precisian, you man of neck-cloths and shoe-ties, you worshipper of the great goddess Conventionality. . . . '<sup>4</sup>

The monetary difficulties into which Honeyman fell are also suggested in Brookfield's life. For a time he is said to have tried to escape from heavy expense : ' Yet, rather than run into debts, he had, when a curate, lived in a vault beneath the vestry of his church, sending his wife to stay for a time with her relations.'<sup>5</sup>

(Do not these vaults suggest the other vaults in Lady Whittlesea's Chapel which served for Sherrick's wine shop ?) We also read of Brookfield that ' his career was however a long struggle against odds,

<sup>1</sup> This is from Lt.-Col. C. B. Thackeray's article. A sentence on p. 416 of *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle* reads : ' Ever generous, indulgent, large-minded, Brookfield was never in the least demoralised by taking Holy Orders.'

<sup>2</sup> Lt.-Col. C. B. Thackeray.

<sup>3</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 450.

<sup>5</sup> Lt.-Col. C. B. Thackeray.

pecuniary embarrassments, and ill-health, whilst he saw his intellectual inferiors pass by.'<sup>1</sup>

Constant illness was another common feature between Honeyman and Brookfield. The picture of Honeyman in his apartment is that 'that meek divine may be sitting with a headache or over a novel or a newspaper.'<sup>2</sup> There is allusion elsewhere of presents sent to him, 'flowers, and grapes, and jelly when he was ill, and throat comforters, and lozenges for his dear bronchitis.' Reference is made to Brookfield's ill-health in the quotation already made above. Continued ill-health, in fact, is cited as being partly responsible for his frequent moroseness. The following sentence relating to the year 1851 may be quoted here to explain even the 'dear bronchitis' of Honeyman: 'From this time Mr. Brookfield's health, always delicate, began to fail more rapidly, and a lung trouble was suspected.'<sup>3</sup>

Other common points seem to be discernible in the qualities of the two priests as preachers. Beautiful as Honeyman's sermons are felt to be at first, they are complained of as becoming stale in course of time. He has little claim to originality and cannot speak extempore: 'Without a book before him, the Incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel was no prophet, and the truth is he made poor work of his oration.'<sup>4</sup>

When after an interval of decline good fortune returned to Honeyman, he made an effort to make his speeches specially eloquent: 'He took some lessons of Husler, of the Haymarket, sir. His sermons are old, I believe; but so to speak, he has got them up with new scenery, dresses, and effects, sir.'<sup>5</sup>

We are also told that Honeyman is particularly good in moving the audience to tears. Frederick Bayham serves to tell us: 'Then Honeyman was spoilt, and gave his sermons over and over again. People got sick of seeing the old humbug cry, the old crocodile!'<sup>6</sup> Meagre as the evidence may seem to be, the temptation cannot be resisted here to make a couple of extracts from Brookfield's letters:

'I began yesterday at Tenison's . . . the congregation seemed pretty large, and I was sufficiently happy and unembarrassed. My sermon was about the ups and downs of Joseph's life—being appropriate to the first lesson of the day—but I had nothing personal about myself. Knowing, however, that they had all a double supply

<sup>1</sup> Lt.-Col. C. B. Thackeray.

<sup>2</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 352.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 581.

<sup>4</sup> *The Newcomes*, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> *The Newcomes*, p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

of Cambric I thought it necessary to be pathetic about the Hebrew Prime Minister of Egypt yearning after the scenes of boyhood in Canaan, which called forth abundant blowing of noses.<sup>1</sup>

Brookfield seems also to have had the habit of dressing up old sermons for new occasions. Here is an extract from another letter of his :

' In the morning, at the late lamented Archbishop Tenison's (as you charmingly called "our benefactor"), I preached the sermon you wrote out for me from that remarkable old man's remarkable MSS. You had written it most legibly, and with scarce a fault. I cut out several pages—and inserted a few paragraphs of my own "to give it an air," and it came off exceedingly well.'<sup>2</sup>

A very interesting feature of comparison between Honeyman and Brookfield is in their position as art-critics. Honeyman looks at the drawings of John James Ridley and praises them without true knowledge of their art :

' Honeyman looked at the boy's drawings from time to time and said, " Hm, ha !—very clever—a great deal of fancy, really." But Honeyman knew no more of the subject than a deaf and dumb man knows of music. He could talk the art-cant very glibly, and had a set of Morghens and Madonnas as became a clergyman and a man of taste ; but he saw not with eyes such as those wherewith Heaven had endowed the humble little butler's boy, to whom splendours of Nature were revealed, to vulgar sights invisible, and beauties manifest in forms, colours, shadows of common objects, when most of the world saw only what was dull, and gross, and familiar.'<sup>3</sup>

When Clive expresses the desire to share a studio with ' J. J. ' Honeyman remarks the want of respectability in the artist's profession :

' " My dear Clive," remarks Mr. Honeyman, with bland dignity, " there are degrees in society which we must respect. You surely cannot think of being a professional artist. Such a profession is very well for your young protégé : but for you—" '<sup>4</sup>

When Clive protests that a painter is as good as a lawyer, or a doctor, or even a soldier, the uncle joins : ' " Far be it from me to say that the pictorial calling is not honourable, but as the world goes there are other professions in greater repute ; and I should have thought Colonel Newcome's son—" '<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> *The Newcomes*, p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

If we should discover in Brookfield a similar ignorance of and contempt for the artist's life, we shall then be able to see how naturally a novelist like Thackeray (to whom art was the first love) will be induced to scoff at a prominent member of society, however dear he may be personally in other ways, for ignorance and want of consideration for something beloved of the author. How could Thackeray tolerate Brookfield, the beau-ideal of a London priest, expressing contempt for 'the pictorial calling'? Many a man is stung in secret by the withering contempt showered on some beloved object of his by his dear friend, brother, or close kinsman. But this secret sense finds expression only once in a time, when a gifted writer invents a story and introduces characters in it, that he may vent his righteous wrath against all that he considers unworthy.

We can infer Brookfield's scanty respect for the artist's life from a couple of extracts from his letters. In a letter dated May 13, 1844, he writes :

' . . . Saturday at six to the Artists' Dinner. I have been at as bad but never so stupidly placed, between a twaddling benevolent, self-satisfied old Cheeryble, and a pilling Surgeon. . . . I was totally ignored, no Church, no Chaplain, no personal ME was drunk, while the medical officers were proposed, and indeed everybody else. This was a decided blunder of theirs. Altogether the dinner was much like other such—no better and could not be worse.'<sup>1</sup>

It will be interesting to know if Thackeray was also present at this dinner, and whether he smelt Brookfield's keen resentment on the occasion. Two days later, in another letter, Brookfield writes :

' . . . I have no intention to dine at the Artist Malevolent again. . . . The cruellest blow of all was, not being ranked below a very modest and sensible apothecary as I was, but being made inferior to Sir William Ross, portrait painter, a man who is not "Rather an ass" (Hallam). There the owl sate opposite to me on the superior side of the table grinning sweetly and patronizingly, when I opened my lips, with a dreadfully mechanical face . . .' <sup>2</sup>

Yet another parallel in Brookfield may be pressed, in the flowery style of Honeyman which so disgusted his friends, and which is illustrated sufficiently in his letter to the Colonel. There is a fairly long letter recorded, which Brookfield wrote to his friend and patron, Lord Lyttelton, under date April 16, 1838. The style is

<sup>1</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

very 'flowery' throughout, but the words at the opening of the letter should serve here as an apt illustration :

'I have known some pleasures in my life, sensual, moral, and intellectual. I have read Shakespeare, I have been in love, I have drunk hock and soda-water in the doggiest of dog-days—but I never knew a pleasure of a broader and more jolly hearted kind than when your medal sent its golden chime into the ear of my soul.'<sup>1</sup>

Several details have been adduced here so far to establish a fair presumption that in many points the Rev. Charles Honeyman was modelled upon the Rev. W. H. Brookfield. The suggestion of this may at first come as a shock to Thackeray critics or to the kinsmen of the Brookfields, for Thackeray and Brookfield were long-standing friends, though the novelist's letters show that later they drifted apart. The estrangement was, indeed, a matter of common knowledge in their circle.<sup>2</sup> But it is hoped that the comparison made above is sufficiently elaborate to induce conviction for the reader. That Thackeray should draw upon such a dear friend of his as Brookfield for the laughable Honeyman need not surprise us. The satirist detaches certain conspicuous traits from a character familiar to him and vividly real from their familiarity. He displays them and the consequences drawn from them, in a character that is half his friend and half a creation of his own, a target for his satire. The greater unkindness lies in the possibility of an entire identification of the two by the eager reader. There may be a graceful reference to Brookfield in Thackeray's sketch of the Curate's Walk, but the successful society preacher must offer very tempting material, of a different kind, to the satirist's pen in the profound art of the novel.

<sup>1</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Anne Thackeray Ritchie*, edited by Hester Ritchie, p. 55.

*REMINISCENCES OF A HARROW MASTER—III.*

AMONG the factors making for the breadth of the education at Harrow were the lectures given in Speechroom by many of the leading men of the day. Very great trouble was taken in getting the best men to come and talk to the boys, and that this trouble was rewarded is clear from the names of those who came to speak upon subjects which they had made their own or about which they had very special knowledge. Here are some of the names. Lord George Hamilton, when he was the Secretary of State for India ; Mr. Bayard, the American Ambassador—later on, during the War, Mr. Page came, as did also Lord Curzon quite at the beginning of the War ; H. M. Stanley lectured shortly after returning from his last expedition across what was then and is no longer Darkest Africa ; Sir Robert Scott Moncrieff spoke of his engineering work, the construction of the barrage on the Nile ; Nansen gave a graphic description with thrilling pictures of his attempt to find the North Pole ; Sir Robert Ball, who came more than once, was also fascinatingly interesting in his talks about astronomy, with simple, at times almost homely, illustrations to make clear conceptions of size and distance ; Professor Boys had wonderful pictures of flying bullets, bullets through glass panes and the glass only just falling ; Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft came, the former a welcome reader of the *Christmas Carol* ; and the great hunter Selous, and the intrepid Captain Scott, and later on Shackleton—who had a boy in the school ; and there were lectures which touched on other aspects of life. Father Stanton of St. Albans, Holborn, came straight, as he told us, from a boys' club ; he began his address thus, with a merry smile : ‘I have just come from unsophisticated Holborn boys and I find this audience rather dull ; you are all educated and dressed to a pattern ; my boys have no pattern’ ; he went on to explain what he meant—his audience did the expected, his boys were always doing and saying the unexpected. As an illustration he told a story of how after working for some time with a class of raw material he had begun to think he was making some impression upon their moral sense, when he overheard them in the street one evening after he had dismissed them saying ‘he was not a bad ole bloke ; there was no ’ouse they

would not crib for him if he asked them.' But he was full of good things about them and the delight and happiness of his work. As a contrast Mr. Spurgeon came too ; he had many racy stories, and was emphatic about the wrong of indiscriminate alms-giving, the deceit which it necessitated and the hypocrisy which it fostered. A man begged of him with a pitiful tale, and to soften his heart said he attended the Tabernacle services and had derived much benefit from them ; before he came to them he ' feared neither God nor devil ; now I love them both equally.' Both Lord Roberts and Lord Wolseley came ; the former seemed to be reading a chapter out of his book on Delhi and could scarcely be called a great lecturer. Ian Maclaren talked about the art of story-telling, and proved as delightful a raconteur as he was a story-writer.

It would not be difficult to recall in detail something of what these and other lecturers said, for accompanied as for the most part they were with lantern slides they provided memorable episodes in the term. Lord George Hamilton and Mr. Bayard spoke within a few days of one another. Lord George came, as he told us, direct from a Cabinet meeting—Lord Salisbury was then Prime Minister—to talk to his old school about the responsibilities of Empire, and more especially about the very serious Indian famine then raging ; he appealed to justice rather than to sentiment ; probably it was the first time that current affairs of grave national importance had been thus brought before boys by a responsible Minister of the Crown. Among his hearers must have been Lord Ronaldshay, then a boy in Elmfield, Governor of Bengal from 1917-1922.

Mr. Bayard made a deep impression ; now more than thirty years after I can remember that tall, dignified figure with the beautiful face telling his young hearers what it meant to him, an American bred on the principles of Magna Charta, when for the first time he saw on the one hand the fields of Runnymede and on the other the historic hill of Harrow, and of his hope that in his own country, yet too young to possess a child like Harrow, there would grow up schools with similar great traditions : and not without a touch of a very real pathos he spoke of the thoughts of an old man in the presence of so many fresh young lives shortly to step out upon the threshold of the twentieth century to take their part in its life of tremulous movements and excitements, of the developments of science and of the greater need than ever of individual character. There had been great men in England in the past, there were great men in the present, there would be need

of greater in the future. How true those words have proved! And as he thanked the boys for their kindly greeting he told them he could not feel more affectionate interest in them if they were his own American boys. The speech was very moving and none could fail to be touched by the sincerity of the cultured gentleman who made it.

Incidental details of other lectures come back to me. The extraordinary power, for instance, in the voice of H. M. Stanley. He had been speaking of the long journey through the dense, untrodden primeval forest, and of their emergence at last into daylight after many months. His wild native carriers seem to have lost control of themselves in their joy, perhaps in much the same way as, two thousand years ago, the weary, depressed Greeks shouted '*θάλασσα θάλασσα*', at the sight of the sea, and Stanley told us he gave the command to them to halt; but the power in that voice as he said 'Halt!' was paralysing; no material barrier would have been anything like as effective, that could have been circumvented or broken down; but 'Halt!' as Stanley said it on the Speechroom platform stayed not only all movement, but all desire and all power to move: the spring of all life was gone. The utterance of this one word was a revelation; it was no longer difficult to know where the strength lay that had carried him through his dangers and difficulties.

An address by G. W. E. Russell to his old school is worth recalling in these times of unrest, if only for the prophetic utterances contained in it. Speaking of the Cavendish Club and of the need of social service, he held up Ashley Cooper—afterwards Lord Shaftesbury—'as the highest type of English gentleman in mind, in appearance, in voice, in character, in living, because he devoted all his powers to the service of others,' and said that a Harrow boy was extraordinarily fortunate, for he had a larger share of the world's blessings, comfort, education, games, home, than he had any right to, and the greatest factor making for discord and disruption was the growing class hatred, A asking why B should have so much more of the world's pleasures, so much more wealth, more time for enjoyment, so much more education than he has, and then appealed to his hearers to give up such words as 'chaw,' 'cad,' 'lout,' and to remember that these poorer and less fortunate ones had the same feelings, same sensibilities, and were fellow members of the human family of which the eldest brother is Jesus Christ.

I recall these lectures because as I look back they seem to me to

have contributed so much to Harrow's greatness as a school, and to reveal some of the forces at work that help to shape the destiny of England, and further they were so deeply antagonistic to that conception of education which fosters class warfare. Perhaps in the years not far ahead such schools as Harrow with their noble traditions will not count as much in the national life as they have done in the past ; our rulers are coming from a less restricted class and from schools where the power of conduct, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners have not acquired the strength and charm that come from age, and where the value of these things is not rated as highly as that of knowledge. Yet it is these things which oil the wheels of life and make for its smooth working and so for the breaking down of class hatred and bitterness—it is these things that really matter.

In addition to lectures there were many memorable concerts—especially memorable was a performance of the ‘Elijah’ at which Santley came to sing the part he had made his own, and by which he had sprung into fame and retained his reputation for forty years. There were also renderings of ‘The Golden Legend,’ and of Parry’s ‘Revenge,’ and of several of the more famous oratorios, ‘The Messiah,’ ‘The Creation,’ ‘St. Paul,’ etc., but the expense of these performances with the distinguished soloists, the large choir and orchestra necessary was very great, and only when funds had accumulated was it possible to afford them. Mr. Eaton Fanning—the then director of music—told me that he tried to get Madame Adelina Patti, holding out to her as an inducement (for her normal fee was quite beyond the limits of the school exchequer) that ‘she would receive the ovation of her life,’ and she replied ‘she had that at every concert.’ She did not come. Great artists, however, did come, and they seemed to receive as much pleasure as they gave, and that was very much.

There were entertainments of a lighter character ; one by Sir H. Furness on the ‘Humours of Parliament’ stands out very vividly in my memory, accompanied as it was by inimitable sketches which lost nothing of their delicacy of touch and accuracy of detail by being greatly enlarged and thrown on the screen. One especially of the procession of the Speaker with Black Rod and many members attending him across the Lobby from the House of Commons to the House of Lords was a marvellous piece of drawing. He told us the dimensions of the original sketch ; I remember feeling staggered when he said that the figures in the original were about as long as a

finger nail. Furness came again several years later, but for some reason the charm of his lecture had gone ; he himself acknowledged after it that he had not been as successful as on the former occasion. He had then left *Punch* and 'Like-a-joko' had failed.

But I pass on to other memories, and strange as it appears, the days of Bishop Welldon's headmastership, though the farthest off in length of time, are not only the most vivid but also the greatest days in the School's history as I knew it. Perhaps distance lends enchantment to the view ; but certainly in memory the winter term of 1898 when he left ends a very definite epoch. On the farther side are visions of great things attempted and often achieved, on this side the measure of the greatness is different, or possibly the dark clouds which gradually gathered on the horizon only dimmed the view, and the greatness was there as before.

Mr. Welldon left to become Bishop of Calcutta. Dr. Wood, then headmaster of Tonbridge, was appointed in his place. He came with a well-earned and deserved reputation as a classical scholar and teacher. Some years before he had been a wonderful success at Leamington ; he had made the school, just as Thring made Uppingham and Arnold made Rugby, and apart from him it seems not to have had any vigorous life. From Leamington he went to Tonbridge and left it at the age of fifty-five to take up the heavy and responsible task of leading and ruling Harrow, not an easy task at any time, especially for one from whom the first spring of youth had gone.

The new headmaster was introduced to us at a dinner given by Bishop Welldon. The latter's health was proposed by Bowen, the then senior master, in a delightfully humorous speech in which he gave a warm welcome to Dr. Wood. Bowen spoke, as it were, on the text, 'Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day ?' When it came to Dr. Wood to reply, it was difficult not to continue in thought the story of Elijah and to feel that a double portion of his spirit had not yet fallen upon his successor, though it might yet come, for the promise was conditional. But Dr. Wood was starting his career at an age twice that of his immediate predecessors. Mr. Welldon had been appointed at the age of twenty-eight, Dr. Butler and Dr. Vaughan were even younger. Tradition for a century had been in favour of young headmasters ; there is much to be said in their favour ; experience is not an essential, it may even be a hindrance to an active and creative mind.

Dr. Wood had hitherto been in schools where the boys came for the most part from less wealthy homes, or where the outlook on life is different, for there is a world of difference between the outlook of those who have already arrived and of those who are still striving. Dante-like in appearance, an English gentleman of winning courtesy and manners, very lovable, a delightful letter writer, he was a notable man, yet perhaps his reputation among the leading headmasters of the past fifty years would have been different had he not accepted the invitation to come to Harrow. A famous tutor of Balliol said of him that he was the greatest teacher of Classics in England. I can well believe this high tribute to have been true: the beauty of his sermons in thought and expression, their charm of delivery, were witness of the fact that he was steeped in classical literature both ancient and modern, and that he loved the familiar friends whom he knew so well. Probably very few indeed of the many sermons which are heard in the course of a lifetime are remembered for more than a brief time, perhaps for not more than hours, if as long. Most people could count those they would willingly listen to again on the fingers of one hand; if I apply that test to myself I would like to live again during that half-hour when Dr. Wood was preaching at the service held in the Harrow Parish Church while King Edward was being crowned in Westminster Abbey. There is still remembered the feeling of utter blankness left when he ceased to speak. He had drawn a picture, in words of dignity and of strength, not unworthy of the Hebrew prophets of old, of what the crowning of a King of England meant, and of the pathos attached to this particular crowning so nearly missed and so greatly shorn of its ceremonial. After he ended, something perfect in beauty, in form and in expression was no longer there.

When he entered upon his work at the beginning of 1899 the Fates must have smiled a sardonic smile, knowing that little by little they intended to give Harrow a bad time. At any rate during the eleven years of his headmastership things did not go well. In 1899 there were about 660 boys in the school; steadily the numbers fell till there were less than 500—a very serious matter to a school which in those days had only a pittance of an endowment, and depended upon its numbers to meet expenses. But this was only one among many troubles; there was a record number of changes on the staff; very many of the masters whom he started with died or left during his headmastership. At one time it seemed as if we

were always mourning some heavy loss. Bowen died quite suddenly during one Easter holiday, and not long afterwards Howson, Colbeck, Searle died, and Welsford a few years later. These were men of great distinction and of great prominence in the life of the School. They were among the senior house masters ; other masters left for headmasterships or for other reasons. Gilson, Hyslop, Kempson, Ashford Talbot became headmasters ; Bushell, Hallam, Marshall, Stogdon, Bosworth Smith, Guillelard, Tosswell retired, and others left. It was a period of rapid and constant change ; masters were continually coming and going, and all this made for a weakening of tradition and for difficulties. The choosing of masters is not easy, as I found when Dr. Wood withdrew more and more from this responsibility.

A cynic has said, much probably to his own joy, ‘He who can does, he who can’t teaches’—an epigram amusing but devoid of a particle of truth. Irrefutable facts condemn it. ‘He who can’t’ has no chance of teaching, his would-be pupils see to that ; they diagnose with unerring certainty ‘him who can’t,’ and in the exuberance of their youth show him no mercy. Boys don’t mean to be cruel and unkind, but they delight in the present and leave the future to take care of itself ; that their victim suffers and is unhappy does not enter their heads ; ‘he who can’t’ is in their room and the fun begins. By craft they get him on a high windowsill to close a window ‘which requires a man’s strength,’ and keep him there ; or a delicate boy who happens to be strong enough to be captain of cricket suddenly faints, and six sturdy companions carry him out, not to return, and the lesson is given up ; or one (afterwards a prominent Cabinet minister) plays a Jew’s harp, and others keep time to the tune ; or one spies in the room a mouse carefully kept for the occasion ; some scramble to catch it, while others flee from it from pillar to post ; or plaintively they all say, ‘Please, sir, we will be good if you will tell us about the cricket match of last Saturday’ ; or—but why enumerate the doings and sayings of happy light-hearted boys in the presence of ‘him who can’t’ ? Their methods, sometimes subtle, sometimes grotesque, sometimes bald, are always effective when ‘he who can’t’ is there.

There are many men with great degrees who cannot be school-masters ; the plunge from the world of ideas into the world of experience is impossible for them. Some men with apparently every physical requisite can never learn to swim ; the same inability is attached to the profession of teaching. Men with other qualifications generously supplied have not the gift necessary to

maintain order, and without order—order maintained without conscious effort—schoolmastering is impossible. The Church seems to provide a more congenial opening, and fuller opportunities for the exercise of their gifts, and many men who perforce gave up teaching have risen to high places as Church dignitaries.

Constant changes in a school, especially when several are due to disciplinary troubles, make for unrest and general slackness ; but in addition to the many internal conditions there were other factors during the years from 1899 onwards which made for special difficulties. It was a time of national transition and of a rude awakening. The old order beloved of Queen Victoria was changing, giving place to new. The unexpected prolongation and initial reverses of the Boer War were a great blow to self-complacency and a revelation that in spite of the imposing grandeur of the military displays at the time of the Jubilee celebrations the machine which worked some of the national services was not functioning properly, nor giving the finished product required of it. We had made a fine show of pageantry in the High Street of the world, but was there much behind it ? Men's hearts failed them and a process of overhauling began, a process not limited to Government departments. It extended into school life too. The Army examinations were looked into and considerably altered ; by a side-issue inspections either by the Board of Education or by some other recognised authority were forced upon the Public Schools, hitherto independent and able to snap their fingers at external criticism. Change rather than the *status quo* was the order of the day : the old classical régime came into the melting-pot ; even poor old Euclid, in spite of his time-honoured tradition, was thrown aside ; nothing seemed safe from the so-called reform.

No wonder Dr. Wood lost something of the keenness with which he had started. The older masters who knew the ropes well and who had helped to hand on unimpaired the great name of the School were fast leaving ; the whole edifice of the educational syllabus was falling down ; what seemed to him spirituality, work for work's sake, was being replaced by a lower standard, that of utility, and he had no sympathy with it. He retired more and more into his study away from the difficulties which would have taxed all the resources of a much younger and fresher man. He left the appointments of masters to heads of departments ; he interfered very little in the discipline of the school ; a reputation for slackness got abroad, which was totally unjustified, and the numbers fell very considerably. Some boarding houses were definitely closed and

others were very far short of their normal numbers. The Fates were doing their work well. One big boarding house was burnt down, fortunately with only material loss : there was the disturbing scare of a diphtheria epidemic, a scare which arose out of a very few cases, I do not think five in all, but while it lasted telegrams were sent to anxious parents by delighted boys, 'We are dying like flies, send for me at once.' But Dr. Wood, calm and unperturbed, was always delightful to talk to ; given to hospitality, he was a most genial host and keen upon his occasional game of golf. In the Vaughan Library there is a striking portrait of him, with the delicate hands and beautiful face. It gives some impression of a fascinating personality. What a pity his headmastership coincided with such a time of stress and strain !

But in spite of

'The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'

marked by the constantly falling numbers, the School measured by every other standard applicable was doing extremely well. Year by year it gained many academic distinctions, open scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge, high positions in the Woolwich examination. Some years it had a record of which every school would have been glad, and glad to tell of : some of the ablest boys it has ever been my privilege to meet during the course of a long life as a schoolmaster were in the School between the years 1900-1910. Out of the eight matches finished at Lord's during these years Harrow won four, and once at least it won the Ashburton Shield, an honour not since attained. That was a night of great jubilation when the Corps in full dress with the band playing marched down to the station to meet the successful eight on their return from Bisley. The captain was carried aloft up the Hill, to the strains of 'The Conquering Hero,' to the school yard, where Dr. Wood awaited them, to welcome and congratulate. He always rose to such occasions with dignity and with charm : nor was there any internal reason to justify the School's loss of popularity. It was just bad luck, which acting upon a sensitive nature seemed to chill the efforts necessary to stay the decline, and yet, above all things, hope and energy and idealism were especially needed.

It was during these days that we heard of the relief of Ladysmith and of Mafeking and the signing of the final Peace. On the night when Mafeking was relieved there were scenes of wild excitement in the street, but the boys never got out of hand, as it was well known they did in one great school. In the middle of the road

opposite Mr. Bosworth Smith's house a bonfire was started, probably by mere accident and quite unpremeditated. Naturally all the boys were soon at the windows, watching a fantastic dance round the flames. How these flames were replenished I do not know, though as they shot up afresh the remark was heard from a distressed lady, 'Oh, there is one of my drawing-room chairs.'

The news of the signing of Peace reached us as we came out of Chapel at 8 o'clock on Sunday evening ; a policeman had specially waited to tell Dr. Wood, who at once said 'There must be a whole holiday to-morrow' ; a decision made on the spur of the moment which was unfortunate. It raised considerable difficulties about 'Bill'—the name applied to the roll-call of the School—about organised games, about what to do, how to occupy the boys. Many of them paraded the street next morning, mafficking, waving flags, singing songs and rather bored. Altogether it was unfortunate, for during the same week there was a whole field day, which upset the work of the School ; on Wednesday there was Governors' Speech Day, more or less a holiday ; on Thursday there was something else, I forget what ; but all this coming in the same week very naturally gave a handle to the talkative, who were not slow to remark that there was only one day's work during that week ; probably when the remark had passed over the ten miles to reach the London Clubs, it was that the Harrow boys had not done a single day's work during the whole week.

There ought always to be remembered with gratitude in connexion with Dr. Wood's headmastership that by his foresight and large generosity the School purchased some hundreds of acres of land at the foot of the Hill which were necessary as playing fields. They came into the market and were on the point of being bought up by the speculative builder when he decided that at all costs they must be bought, for the sake not only of the amenities of the School, but for its continued existence as it was. To make their purchase possible he gave up a large part of his income. That his decision to purchase was wise is clear from the building which has since taken place in the neighbourhood and the rapid growth of London towards Harrow. King Edward and Queen Alexandra came down in 1905 to inaugurate the transfer of these fields to the School's property.

There were other memorable historic events during these critical and important years. The Chapel was greatly enlarged and beautified under the guidance of Sir Aston Webb as a memorial to the Harrovians who had fallen in the South African War. Two

transepts were added ; while they were being built and the Chapel was unusable, services were held in Speechroom, to our discomfort. The foundation-stone of the south transept was laid very appropriately by Lord Roberts in the presence of a great crowd, boys, parents, and friends. The most moving part of the ceremony occurred when Dr. Wood slowly called over for the last time the names of the dead, who only a short way off in the school yard in the years gone by had so often answered 'Here, sir.' By their death they had proved that the words of their song were no mere idle boast :

' Come what will,  
Good or ill,  
We will answer, " We are here." '

Perhaps I may recall one other incident of about this time, not indeed because Dr. Wood played a prominent part in it, though he was Chairman of the meeting in the town on behalf of Barnardo's work at which it took place—this work always appealed to him, he had many meetings in Speechroom for it. Dr. Barnardo was pleading for financial help, and never have I come in contact with so great a manifestation of mesmeric power as he exercised over his audience ; first he asked for donations of £10, and met with a few responses ; then for £5 ; then, warming to his work and pointing directly at individuals, he asked them to give him £2 and £1. Victim after victim fell to the spell he cast upon them till, perhaps after only a few moments, he had all the money required. The scene was strange, people appeared to lose all power of judgment and of restraint. Next morning they awoke to hard fact and many had to borrow the money to redeem their promise.

Dr. Wood resigned at the end of the summer term of 1910. In the beautiful early light of the summer morning he drove away in his motor shortly after the boys had left for the holidays—they leave at 7 A.M. As he passed along the High Street, with the grace and courtesy which became him so well, he stopped to call at a little allsorts shop kept by two aged sisters, who had lived in their old-world house for many years, and who had no connexion whatever with the School. He left his car to shake hands with them and say good-bye. It was a kind act of thoughtfulness, very characteristic of him—he was always lovable. If only the Silent Fates had not smiled when he was asked to come to Harrow.

C. H. P. MAYO.

*LITERARY ACROSTICS.*

THE Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is opened first.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 55.

(The Third of the Series.)

'He ——— at ——— that never felt a wound.'

1. ' You by me,  
And I by you; this is your hand in mine,  
And side by side we sit.'
2. 'E'en the slight harebell raised its head,  
——— from her airy tread.'
3. ' Who pens a ———, when he should engross.'
4. ' Then shook the hills with ——— riven,  
Then rush'd the steed to battle driven.'
5. ' Descending fast, the mountain shadows kiss  
Thy glorious gulf, unconquer'd ——— !'

## RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on p. x of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue.
4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back.
5. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.

6. Solvers who write a second letter to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.

7. Answers to Acrostic No. 55 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than March 20.

## ANSWER TO NO. 54.

1. D	elpho	S
2. A	ngelic	A
3. L	yceu	M
4. I	ri	S
5. L	imb	O
6. A	mai	N

## PROEM :

*Samson Agonistes.*

## LIGHTS :

1. *The Hymn*, xix.
2. *Paradise Regained*, iii.
3. *Paradise Regained*, iv.
4. *Comus*.
5. *Paradise Lost*, iii.
6. *Lycidas*.

Acrostic No. 53 ('Simple Norman'): Correct answers were received from 216 solvers, incorrect from 9, and there were eleven that disregarded the rules. For the last light 'Even' and 'Ev'n' were alike acceptable.

The first correct answer that was opened came from 'Strensall,' and she wins the monthly prize. Mrs. Usherwood, 20, St. Hilda's, Whitby, Yorkshire, will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

Competitors are requested not to send pins, clips, or other paper-fasteners; their coupons do not require to be affixed in any way. A half-sheet of notepaper is best for answers; flimsy paper and big sheets are both undesirable.

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